CURTIS JONES • TAKUMI MINAMINO • JÜRGEN KLOPP • TRENT & ROBBO • THE OX • ALL MO'S UCL GOALS

LIVERPOOL FC

AND NOW YOU'RE GONNA BELIEVE US...

WE'RE CHAMPIONS OF THE WORLD!



liverpoolfc.com
Official Liverpool FC Monthly Magazine

Contents



Reach Sport
Editor David Cottrell Assistant Editor William Hughes Writer Chris McLoughlin Production Editor Michael McGuinness Design Colin Sumpter
Contributors Dave Ball, Ged Rea, Harri Aston, Davey Brett Photography Getty Images, Press Association, Mirrorpix, Liverpool Echo, John Powell, Andrew Powell, Nicholas Taylor © Liverpool Football Club & Athletic Grounds Ltd. Published by Reach Sport Managing Director Steve Hanrahan
Commercial Director Will Beedles Executive Art Editor Rick Cooke Executive Editor Paul Dove Marketing & Communications Manager Claire Brown
Printed by William Gibbons Email liverpoolfcmag@reachsport.com. To subscribe call 0845 143 0001 or visit www.reachsportshop.com

YOU'LL NEVER WALK ALONE
LIVERPOOL FOOTBALL CLUB
EST·1892



A BOY LIKE CURTIS



Curtis Jones became the youngest goalscorer in a Merseyside derby since Robbie Fowler in March 1994 when he curled home that marvellous winner in the recent FA Cup third-round tie.

The midfielder, who turns 19 on 30 January, was one of a number of youngsters who starred as the Reds sent a full-strength Everton side crashing out of the tournament. His brilliant curling effort past England keeper Jordan Pickford 19 minutes from time ensured the progress of Klopp's colts into the last 32.

Curtis told the magazine: "Growing up as a local lad it is always your dream to score in a Merseyside derby and, of course, it was a very proud moment for me. But I think the important thing was that we won the the game and it was a great team performance with all the young lads like Harvey [Elliott], Neco [Williams], Pedro [Chirivella], Nat [Phillips] and Yasser [Larouci] doing really well and showing how much we all want to play."

→



Curtis, who wore the no48 shirt, also explained the work that had gone into his winning strike.

"In the FA Cup they use Mitre balls and we were practising with them in the sessions before the game. To be fair, the flight of those balls is a bit different to the ones we use in the Premier League.

"When Div [Origi] played the ball back to me I noticed that the defender had backed off a little and that I could get a shot in.

"Obviously it was an incredible feeling to see it go in. Now we're looking forward to the next game in this competition as we just want to win games."



CHAMBERLAIN
15
ORIGI
27
LAROUCI
70
CHIRIVELLA
68
JONES
48
Standard Chartered
new balance
Western Union

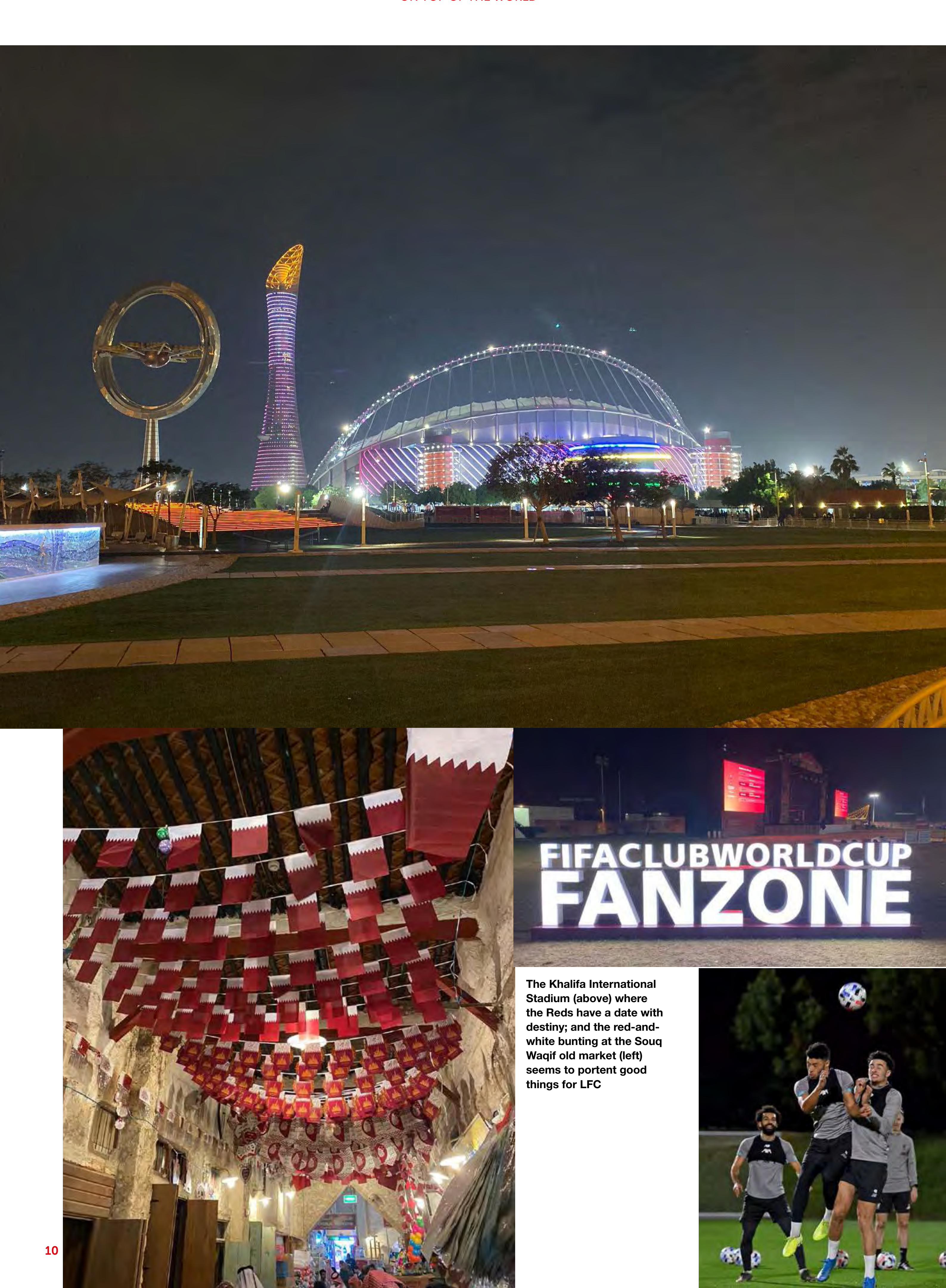


ON TOP OF THE WORLD

How the mighty Reds made history in the Middle East



BOBBY VISION #1



The Khalifa International Stadium (above) where the Reds have a date with destiny; and the red-and-white bunting at the Souq Waqif old market (left) seems to portent good things for LFC

It's shortly after 7.45pm on a Tuesday night in mid-December and clusters of Liverpool supporters are gathered around smartphones, iPads and laptops in the Cabin Bar at Manchester Airport's Terminal 2.

There's a general hush as pint glasses are sipped from, followed by an audible gasp. They might be waiting to board a flight to Doha – the last scheduled flight to leave T2 that night – but their minds are in Birmingham.

The youngest Liverpool FC team in history, average age 19 years and 182 days, are taking on a near full-strength Aston Villa side in the Carabao Cup quarter-final. These hardcore travelling Kopites would normally be there in person, cheering coach Neil Critchley's side on, but this is no normal week. Instead they are huddled around electronic devices, observing events through free airport wifi, before boarding a plane to Qatar. A new country for the checklist.

Those gasps come when Herbie Kane, not once but twice, is denied an opening goal by the Villa keeper. But by the time Qatar Airways flight QR24 is called for boarding, the young Reds are 4-0 down. When the stoppage-time fifth, in a harsh 5-0 defeat, goes in, the Boeing 787-8 Dreamliner is almost full and ready for takeoff.

Monterrey, Flamengo, we're the greatest team by far. We're the mighty Liverpool, we're going to Qatar. We're going to Qatar...

MONTERREY

Netherlands. Germany. Czech Republic. Slovakia. Hungary. Romania. Bulgaria. Turkey.

It sounds like the kind of route Liverpool have taken to a European Cup final, but while the aim of getting to Istanbul again in 2020 remains a target for the Redmen, this overnight route is heading off to a far foreign land where the oil fills barrels in their thousands, and there's nothing to see but the sand.

Qatar is situated on the northeastern coast of the Arabian Peninsula. Bordered only by Saudi Arabia, and surrounded by the Persian Gulf, it's a country that has grown out of the desert thanks to the third-largest natural gas and oil reserves in the world and, as a result, the highest per capita income. Such wealth has allowed Qatar to buy a seat at football's top table.

The 2022 FIFA World Cup will, controversially, be held in Doha. Extreme summer temperatures mean that, for the first time, the tournament will be staged in late November and December, forcing a six-week break in domestic football. Issues surrounding the migrant labour hired to build Doha's infrastructure and stadiums have added to the controversy.

FIFA's 2019 Club World Cup is, in effect, Doha's first test-event for the World Cup. They've already got it booked in again for 2020.

With Champions League winners Liverpool representing Europe in a competition the club hasn't played in since travelling to Tokyo in 2005, it means the plane full of travelling Kopites I'm sat upon







Just time to train and meet Reds fans on the eve of the semi-final with Monterrey


BOBBY
VISION #3
BBC
SPORT

continues past Turkey, swerves Syria and heads into the Middle East over Iraq before passing Kuwait and Bahrain.

A little over six hours after take-off, and with plenty of Reds watching Christmas films and taking advantage of complimentary free wifi to celebrate National Qatar Day instead of kipping before the morning sunlight streams through the windows, flight QR24 touches down at Hamad International Airport.

Some familiar Liverpudlian faces can be spotted in the queue for immigration, the lads from *The Anfield Wrap* among them, before the slow process of getting through Qatari immigration begins. Eyes scanned. Fingerprints taken. Hotel details noted. Passport stamped. Then through another security check. Talk about putting the Q into Qatar.

On the plus side, Hamad International Airport is only a 10-15 minute ride away from the centre of Doha in a taxi or on the pristine new Doha Metro, which only opened seven months earlier.

The stop at the airport, appropriately on the red line, only opened a matter of weeks ago and with a day pass costing QR6 – £1.25 as the Bank of England would value it – then with suitcase in tow I give the world's newest rapid transit system a whirl. Despite the early hour – Qatar is three hours ahead of the UK – the trains are busy due to the National Qatar Day celebrations.

To mark the annual event, celebrated on 18 December to commemorate Qatar's unification in 1878, most Qataris get the day off work and school. A huge National Day parade, featuring government and military officials plus a fly-by and fireworks, takes place on Doha's Corniche (the city's waterfront promenade that stretches for seven kilometres) with numerous road closures.

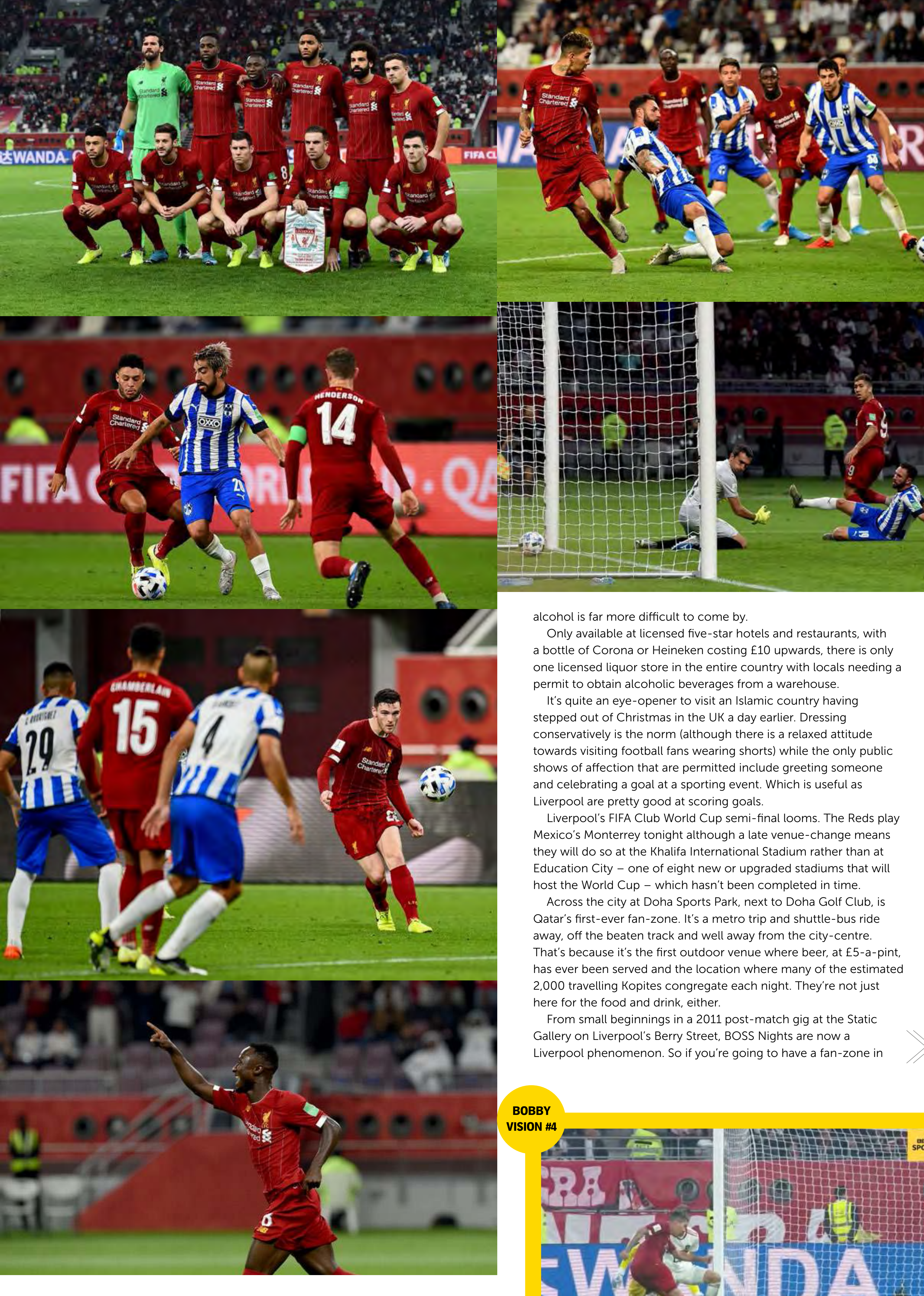
It's the biggest party of Doha's year and as I emerge from the Souq Waqif metro station, via a change at Msheireb, I'm greeted by hundreds upon hundreds of flag-waving Qataris – many leaning out of car windows – with fellas selling flags and various other pieces of nationalist memorabilia like the street sellers on the approaches to Anfield on a matchday.

My hotel, The Golden Tulip, is a short cab ride away and after paying a few quid to get an early check-in and having breakfast, it's time to go exploring.

Souq Waqif, Doha's old market, is nearby. It's a traditional Middle East market squeezed into narrow alleyways and backstreets, some of it indoor, some of it out. Spices, perfumes, jewellery, handicrafts, traditional dress, birds, puppies, rugs, souvenirs...if you can't find what you're looking to buy in Souq Waqif it probably isn't for sale.

A wide variety of restaurants representing different nationalities – 2.3 million of Qatar's 2.6 million population are expatriates – and shisha bars also line the streets. Over the next four days I find myself eating in Persian, Syrian and Turkish establishments, but





alcohol is far more difficult to come by.

Only available at licensed five-star hotels and restaurants, with a bottle of Corona or Heineken costing £10 upwards, there is only one licensed liquor store in the entire country with locals needing a permit to obtain alcoholic beverages from a warehouse.

It's quite an eye-opener to visit an Islamic country having stepped out of Christmas in the UK a day earlier. Dressing conservatively is the norm (although there is a relaxed attitude towards visiting football fans wearing shorts) while the only public shows of affection that are permitted include greeting someone and celebrating a goal at a sporting event. Which is useful as Liverpool are pretty good at scoring goals.

Liverpool's FIFA Club World Cup semi-final looms. The Reds play Mexico's Monterrey tonight although a late venue-change means they will do so at the Khalifa International Stadium rather than at Education City – one of eight new or upgraded stadiums that will host the World Cup – which hasn't been completed in time.

Across the city at Doha Sports Park, next to Doha Golf Club, is Qatar's first-ever fan-zone. It's a metro trip and shuttle-bus ride away, off the beaten track and well away from the city-centre. That's because it's the first outdoor venue where beer, at £5-a-pint, has ever been served and the location where many of the estimated 2,000 travelling Kopites congregate each night. They're not just here for the food and drink, either.

From small beginnings in a 2011 post-match gig at the Static Gallery on Liverpool's Berry Street, BOSS Nights are now a Liverpool phenomenon. So if you're going to have a fan-zone in

Ahead the final Virgil and Gini spoke to Dutch compatriot Nigel de Jong (below) for one international TV broadcaster, while former Arsenal boss Arsene Wenger interviewed Jürgen Klopp for another

Qatar then who better to organise it than BOSS Night founding father Dan Nicholson and who better to play a pre-match set than Kieran Molyneux and Jamie Webster?

They get Liverpool's travelling contingent in the mood, belting out belter after belter, before shuttle buses are boarded and taxis hailed with all roads leading to the Khalifa International Stadium.

Built in 1976, but renovated between 2014-2017, Qatar's national stadium is part of the Doha Sport City complex. The Hamad Aquatic Centre and Aspire Academy are also onsite, but the most striking feature is the 300ft high Aspire Tower.

Also known as 'The Torch Doha' due to the way it is shaped like a flame at the top, the Aspire Tower is a skyscraper hotel and Qatar's tallest building. It's also lit up for Liverpool's clash against Monterrey with red and white being the most prominent colours it interchanges between.

Getting into the 45,000-plus capacity stadium is a pain with security checks taking over 30 minutes for most Reds. Large banners and flags are among the banned items.

Inside the Khalifa, a dome-shaped stadium with single tiers behind both goals and double-tiered stands along the sides, the running track used in the sparsely-attended World Athletic Championships a few months back is covered in faux green turf.





The seats, all maroon and white, in keeping with Qatar's national colours, are far away from the pitch, although not quite West Ham far away. I'm in the upper tier press box, sat on the end of a row next to the *Daily Telegraph*'s Chris Bascombe. "It'd be easier if we met up on Old Hall Street in Liverpool next time," he quips.

There's also the unusual sight of giant air vents, built into the base of the stands, pumping out cool air in the direction of the pitch. It isn't particularly needed in December – it's a pleasant 19-24 degrees for most of the week, even a little chilly later on – and creates the rather odd experience of the stadium getting warmer at full-time when the air-con is switched off.

Central American champions Monterrey have a small but vociferous posse of fans behind one goal with the travelling Kop at the other end, their 'Liverpool: European Royalty' banner catching the eye. But it soon becomes clear that Mo Salah is the biggest attraction of all.

A huge number of Egyptian fans, some of them ex-pats based in Doha, are inside the Khalifa. The noise when Salah enters the pitch to warm up is reminiscent of Beatlemania and they're egged on by the matchday DJ who takes a break from dropping bangers to proclaim: "Who has come to see Mohamed Salah? Let's get this party starteddddddddd!"

You don't get that with George Sephton at Anfield, nor do you get Jordan Henderson playing at centre-half. But with Virgil van Dijk sidelined through illness and every other centre-half bar Joe Gomez recovering from injuries back on Merseyside, the skipper has to fill in. As does James Milner at right-back.

Salah proves to be the architect for Liverpool's opening goal. There are 12 minutes on the clock when he plays a pass for Naby Keita to run onto and the Guinea international slots home his third goal in three games. Two minutes later and the Mexicans are level, Rogelio Funes Mori netting from a rebound after Alisson denies Jesus Gallardo.

It's a reminder that Monterrey are no mugs and as the game develops Alisson is forced to make a number of saves while Jürgen Klopp gets a booking for disputing a decision by Chilean referee Roberto Tobar, who isn't the only erratic official the Reds will encounter this week.

The sight of a second-half Mexican Wave going around the stadium would normally signal a dull game, but then the Reds are playing Mexicans so if ever there is a time for one...

It looks like there will be extra-time for such festivities to continue with the game deadlocked at 1-1 until substitutes Trent Alexander-Arnold and Bobby Firmino combine to conjure up a stoppage-time winner. A slide-rule Alexander-Arnold pass catches Monterrey out at their near post and Firmino nudges the ball home to send Liverpool into the FIFA Club World Cup final.

"It was always going to be a tough game," Adam Lallana, Liverpool's holding midfielder for the night, tells me in the media Mixed Zone afterwards. "They had won something to get to Qatar and teams from Central and South America play differently, but you've got to deal with different dynamics."

With Copa Libertadores champions Flamengo having sealed their place in the final 24 hours earlier courtesy of a 3-1 victory against Saudi Arabia's Al-Hilal, Liverpool's win sets up a rematch of the 1981 Club World Cup final (or whatever it was called back then).

The Brazilians won that one 3-0 and can clinch a unique treble if they win, but the Reds are also in Qatar to make history and this Liverpool team knows how to win silverware...

BOBBY VISION #5



FLAMENGO

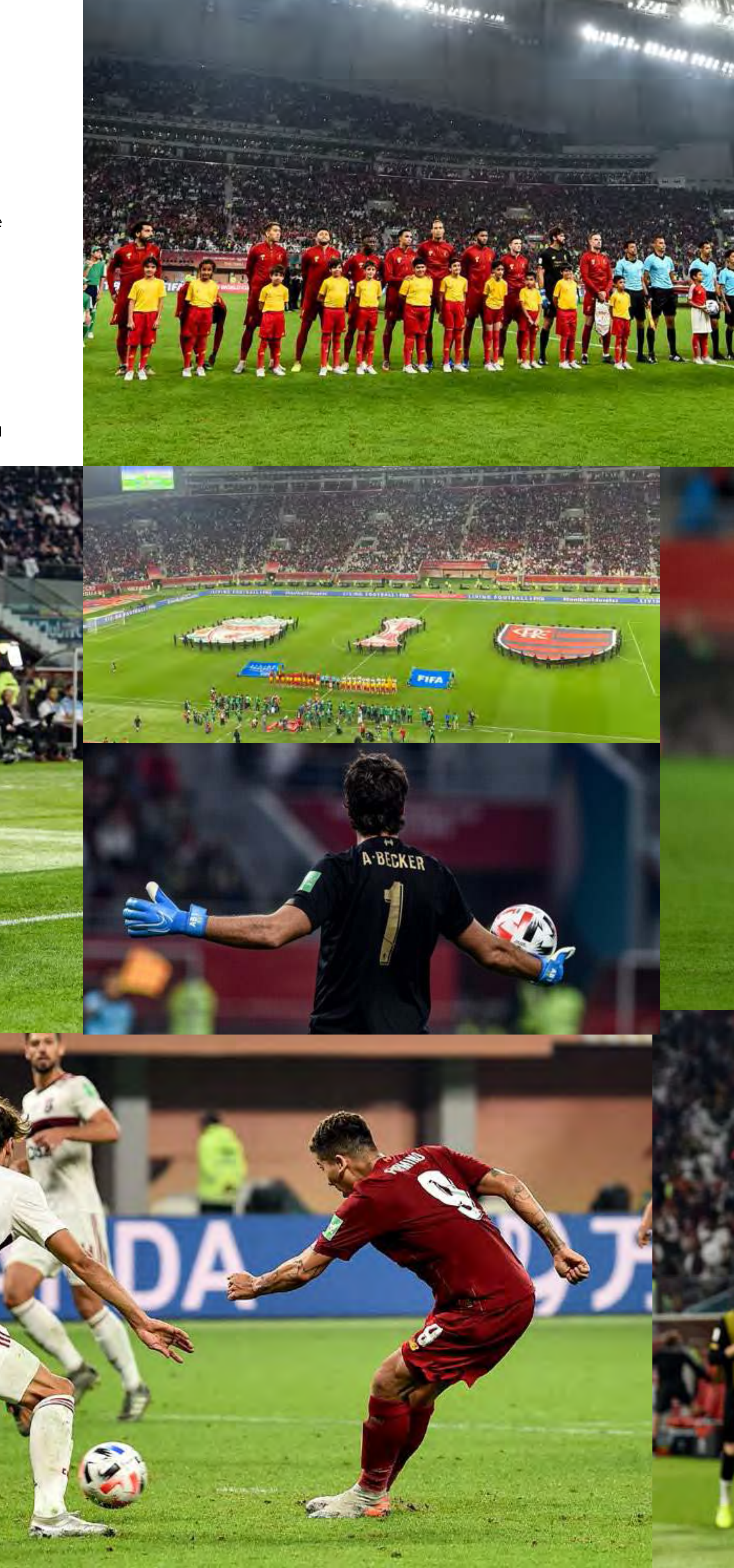
Doha is one of those places that will always be a building site. It's a bit like Las Vegas without the glitz, glamour and casinos. Or the same kind of tourists.

Almost everywhere you turn, a road is being dug up or a skyscraper is being built. The only more common sight, this week at least, is Flamengo fans. They are everywhere and no matter where you see them – in the hotel breakfast room, in the souqs or strolling down the Corniche – they are wearing club colours and, more often than not, chanting or singing the name of their team.

You'll read elsewhere in this magazine an interview I did with Alex Oxlade-Chamberlain in Liverpool's team hotel in Doha. In it he explains why he thinks the FIFA Club World Cup is bigger in South America than it is in Europe. For Flamengo it is massive.

Beat Liverpool, as they did in Tokyo in 1981, and they'll hold the Brazilian league title, Copa Libertadores and FIFA Club World Cup at the same time. It's a treble they've never previously done and with Jesus – manager Jorge Jesus – guiding them, they genuinely believe it is their destiny to beat the Reds.

"Na, na, na, na-na-na na, na-na-na na, Jesus!" – to the tune of The Beatles' *Hey Jude* – is among their repertoire. So too is a song



about beating Liverpool 3-0 in 1981 as I discover on a shuttle-bus back from the fan-park on the Friday night after watching the Lightning Seeds (who were brilliant but had *Three Lions* booed by the travelling Kop!) play there.

The fan-zone is full of Reds with plenty of banners on display, but sat with *This Is Anfield* website co-owner Matt Ladson on a post-midnight bus back to the Metro station, we realise we're the only two Liverpool supporters on it. The Flamengo fans realise the same thing and congregate around us, singing away in Portuguese with lots of flag-waving and gesticulating in our direction.

We sing back, the Bobby Firmino song getting our vocal response underway, yet weirdly the only chant they all stop and listen intently to is "LIV, ERP, double-O L, Liverpool FC!"

It's all good-natured, of course, but with an estimated 15,000 Flamengo followers – 10,000 of them arriving on charter-flights alone – arriving in Qatar from Rio (which is a 20-hour indirect flight away) it is clear that Liverpool supporters will be outnumbered for the final. Not since CSKA Moscow took more to Monaco for the 2005 UEFA Super Cup final has that happened in a cup final.

Indeed, the Flamengo end inside the Khalifa International Stadium on Saturday evening is packed 90 minutes before kick-off. Many have come inside early to watch the third-place play-off – Monterrey beating Al-Hilal on penalties following a 2-2 draw – and it seems they've managed to get some larger flags, which were supposedly banned, into their end.

The first player to emerge for the pre-match warm up is Alisson. The Brazilian is roundly booed by the Brazilians. So too are the rest of the Liverpool team when they emerge from the tunnel shortly afterwards. Club over country and all that.

Fair play to the Flamengo fans, the noise from their end is incessant, but unfortunately isn't enough to drown out the increasingly annoying matchday DJ who bellows: "Liverpool where are you? Let's do this. It's a great time to be alive." It'd be even greater if you'd pipe down, mate.

Mo Salah, just like on Wednesday, gets the loudest cheers while ex-Brazilian and Flamengo goalkeeper Julio Cesar is warmly welcomed ahead of a pre-match interview. Then comes a light show with the floodlights switched off, an arch above one of the stands lit and the music cranked up. It's like being at a Man City home game without the Blue Moon.

After pre-match protocols, including the playing of the FIFA anthem, is completed, we're finally underway in the battle to be champions of the world and there are only 41 seconds on the clock when Firmino scoops a Trent Alexander-Arnold pass over the crossbar when a goal seems certain.

Naby Keita fires a shot over five minutes later and Alexander-Arnold sends a rasper narrowly wide, but it soon becomes clear that Flamengo will make the game a scrappy affair littered with niggly fouls, off-the-ball shenanigans and gamesmanship.

Unfortunately, Qatar-based referee Abdulrahman Al Jassim is unwise to their dark arts and only books Sadio Mane for finally reacting to being blatantly manhandled by Rafinha. At least Liverpool's travelling support are getting increasingly loud with chants of "Li-ver-pool (clap, clap, clap)" accompanied by the beat of a drum.

The obsession with switching the floodlights off continues for a half-time light-show so Liverpool's substitutes warm up in the

BOBBY VISION #6



dark. Just two minutes after the restart, Firmino comes even closer when his shot hits the inside of the post and bounces back across goal. Is it one of those days?

Alisson has to make a decent save from Gabriel Barbosa, Alex Oxlade-Chamberlain is forced off with an ankle injury and Salah has a goal ruled out for offside before Flamengo goalkeeper Diego Alves tips a Salah effort over. The former Valencia keeper is also mysteriously struck down by repeated bouts of cramp whenever Liverpool are just getting into their stride. How strange.

Then comes the drama. With a minute of stoppage-time played Mane runs through and seems set to score until being impeded by Rafinha on the edge of the box. Referee Al Jassim points to the spot and books the full-back. But he's soon surrounded by Flamengo players who demand he consults VAR.

He heads over to the pitchside monitor where replays show that Mane was marginally outside the box when fouled. It should be a free-kick and red card for Rafinha, but unfortunately the referee is out of his depth and makes one of the most bizarre decisions ever – an uncontested drop-ball for Flamengo. To call it incomprehensible is an understatement. No wonder a bemused Klopp can only smile in disbelief on the touchline.

So extra-time it is, the last thing Liverpool need after a busier week than Craig David, but it proves to be third-time-lucky for Firmino in the 99th minute.

Skipper Henderson, the Reds' best player on the night, sends Mane away again with a brilliant pass. This time the Senegalese speedster slips the ball across to Firmino, who turns back inside centre-half Rodrigo Caio, sending Diego Alves to the ground at the same time, before firing the ball into the net. GOAL! 1-0 Liverpool.

Bobby whips his shirt off in celebration – something you can only do in Qatar on a football pitch – and sprints to the touchline before leaping into the air. Within moments all you can hear ringing around the Khalifia is his song. Never before has the line 'the best in the world is Bobby Firmino' sounded more apt.

Flamengo look spent, although at least the goal has miraculously cured Diego Alves' cramp. They manage to create just one chance to equalise, substitute Lincoln lifting a clear-cut chance over in the 119th minute. Moments later the final whistle blows. Liverpool Football Club, for the first time, are champions of the world.

On the pitch the Liverpool players celebrate. Off the pitch the Liverpool fans celebrate. Back at Melwood the fella who updates the Champions Wall will be getting paid overtime.

It takes ages for the trophy presentation to get underway while the on-pitch stage is constructed. The Gini Wijnaldum song is played over the PA system, prompting his team-mates to sing it at him, before there are wild cheers as Salah is presented with the





adidas Golden Ball and Alibaba Cloud Player of the Tournament awards. He probably won the pharaoh play award too.

Next the refereeing team are presented with awards, one of the linesmen getting his flag autographed along the way, before Monterrey re-appear to get their bronze medals and Flamengo get silver. I'm half-expecting the stewards to get medals next, but finally it's time for the world champions to be honoured.

One by one, Liverpool's players have a gold medal draped around their necks before Jordan Henderson is handed the distinctive silver-and-gold trophy by FIFA President Gianni Infantino.

The skipper does his now trademark 'Henderson Shuffle' – no captain in world football has got quicker feet on a podium – before turning away from his team-mates and lifting the trophy high into the Qatari sky with ticker-tape blasting out behind him and Can't Hold Us, a 2011 tune by Macklemore & Ryan Lewis, FIFA's choice of winner's anthem. If only Queen had done a song that fits, eh? But who cares. The Reds are on top of the world.

As the travelling Kop celebrate an English record 47th major trophy a popular current song is adapted by some – "Monterrey, Flamengo we're the greatest team by far, we're the mighty Liverpool we won it in Qatar, we won it in Qatar" – but the final word can only go to one man. Jürgen Klopp. The greatest manager in the world.

"We don't fly 3,000 miles not to show up. It's a wonderful night for us, the club, for everybody who is with us. I said before the game I don't know exactly how it would feel to win it. Now I can say it's outstanding, absolutely sensational."

Now for the Premier League...

Words: Chris McLoughlin



SCOUSE SAMURAI

Japanese ace Takumi Minamino tells the club website about his dream move to Liverpool – and the future

TAKUMI, WELCOME TO LIVERPOOL FOOTBALL CLUB – TALK US THROUGH YOUR EMOTIONS...
It has been a dream, my dream to become a Liverpool player. And I'm so excited that the moment has come true. I've known about it for a while.

DID YOU HAVE A CHANCE TO SAY THANK YOU AND GOODBYE TO RB SALZBURG?
Salzburg is a very important club for me. I managed my messages – thank you and goodbye – to my team-mates, the manager and the fans in Salzburg.

LIVERPOOL FANS HAVE BEEN EAGERLY ANTICIPATING YOUR ARRIVAL. HAVE YOU SEEN THE EXCITEMENT ONLINE? HOW DOES IT MAKE YOU FEEL?
Yes, I have seen and heard about the fans' excitement. But I was calm. Liverpool is a very famous team in Japan as well and it is a dream for a football player to play in such a team. It didn't take me long to come to a decision.

YOU PLAYED WITH NABY KEITA FOR 18 MONTHS AT SALZBURG – DID YOU SPEAK TO HIM ABOUT WHAT IT'S LIKE AT LIVERPOOL?
I didn't speak to him about me coming here but I know him and he knows me and I'm looking forward to playing with him again.

HOW DO YOU SEE THE TRANSITION TO PREMIER LEAGUE FOOTBALL? IS IT A NATURAL STEP FOR YOU?
To play in the Premier League was one of my targets. I think this is the top-class league in the world; I was thinking if my career as a footballer progressed smoothly, someday I would be able to play in the Premier League. But I never thought I would be able to play in this team and I'm really happy about it. I'm looking forward to it.

DO YOU BELIEVE YOU CAN MAKE AN INSTANT IMPACT FROM JANUARY?
Once I'm part of the team, from the moment I'm given the chance to play, I'm intending to make a contribution to this team. For me to be able to do that I'm going to do my very best.

THERE'S CLEARLY A LOT OF COMPETITION FOR PLACES HERE – WILL YOU RELISH PUSHING THE LIKES OF MOHAMED SALAH, SADIO MANE AND ROBERTO FIRMINO?
Not only them, there are many world-class players here and of course it's not an easy challenge. It's not easy to overtake those players to get a position but having the mentality of challenging those players is important to keep the team's high level. That sort of mentality is important for the team and I certainly will play with that mentality.

YOU'VE PLAYED AGAINST LIVERPOOL TWICE THIS SEASON – WHAT DID YOU LEARN FROM THOSE GAMES?
From those games I learned that this team has such a high level of technique and intensity. Their football is of such a high level and I did feel that they were the champions of the Champions League. Feeling that, it makes me feel even happier that I can play in this team. I'm really happy to be part of that team.

AND YOU EXPERIENCED ANFIELD IN OCTOBER – WHAT DID YOU MAKE OF THE STADIUM?
Anfield is a famous stadium in Japan. I think it's a special stadium, especially in terms of the atmosphere of the fans and also the tradition and history of the stadium. I played against Liverpool when I played here, I do remember the atmosphere was fantastic.





HOW MUCH ARE YOU LOOKING FORWARD TO WORKING WITH JÜRGEN KLOPP AND HOW DO YOU THINK HE WILL INFLUENCE YOUR GAME TO IMPROVE MORE?
I'm looking forward to working with Jürgen Klopp. I think one of my strengths will be to be able to communicate with him in German – because I speak a bit of German – and I'm really looking forward to it. I think he is one of the best managers in the world and I always want to improve myself, so it would be great if I could make a contribution to the growth of the team and myself.

YOU'VE BECOME USED TO WINNING AT SALZBURG – DO YOU SEE THAT MENTALITY IN YOUR NEW TEAM-MATES?
I think they do have it. Liverpool are a [top] Premier League team and they won the Champions League last year. I think the team has the same winning mentality, they know how to fight. In that regard, I would like to soak up some of their mentality.

YOU'RE ON TRACK FOR YOUR BEST EVER GOALSCORING SEASON – HOW MUCH ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT DO YOU STILL HAVE?
I'm an offensive player so I always want to assist and score goals. I would like to maintain that quality and the number of situations that directly lead to more goals and assists. I think that is my strength, so I would like to show that strength of mine in this team.

YOU GOT YOUR FIRST GAME UNDER YOUR BELT IN THE FA CUP – NOW WHAT ARE YOUR TARGETS AND AMBITIONS FOR YOUR FUTURE TIME WITH LIVERPOOL?
To win the Premier League and the Champions League, and to make good contributions to the team. That is my target. I would like to make good contributions to goals, assists and wins for the team. I'm looking forward to sharing the excitement with the fans.

KLOPP ON **MINAMINO**



"This is fabulous news – a wonderful signing. We are really, really happy about this. Our supporters have had the chance to see him close up recently so I don't need to sing too loudly about his qualities as they are already known.

"Takumi is a very quick, very clever player, he finds space between the lines. He is brave with the ball but also brave without the ball – a proper team player. He makes the best of himself for the benefit of others.

"His Champions League experience is a big bonus and coming from the club and organisation he does, we know he'll be well coached, used to an elite environment and had all the right experiences. It is fantastic work by our football operations team in how they've handled this transfer. Michael Edwards and the team deserve a lot of credit.

"It's not hard to see why Salzburg is a favoured destination for players with real talent and hunger. From our experiences dealing with, and facing, Salzburg on and off the pitch in recent months, their reputation as a benchmark modern European club will only grow.

"I'm sure all the Liverpool supporters will go out of their way to make Takumi feel at home in our amazing city and club. I am also pretty sure that as of now we have added to our numbers of the LFC family in Japan specifically.

"For those who follow us now because we have one of the country's most exciting talents, I say welcome – it's a special club to be part of."

He's settled quickly into the goalkeepers union at Melwood. "We have a very good group and they have helped me feel welcome. All the goalies are great – they are all magnificent people with John [Achterberg], the goalkeeper coach, his assistant Jack [Robinson] and all the guys including the younger keepers.

"We need to feel that good atmosphere when we are training because we spend a long time together, often training apart from the rest of the team. So we have many situations where we are training alone together and I think having this spirit is a positive thing. We are trying to push each other all the time."

Adrian had only trained for three days before making his bow against Norwich and admits it will take a little while longer for him to become fully integrated into the Liverpool line-up.

"You get the confidence with time. The Super Cup gave me a lot of confidence because when you win you get that positive feeling, so it's great for everyone.

"Hopefully I can keep taking steps forwards, gain more confidence and keep helping the team."


L.F.C.
F.A. CUP WINNERS
1985-1986
LEAGUE CHAMPIONS
L.F.C.
crown
paints
NEW RETRO COLLECTION
EXCLUSIVE TO LFC



"SO FAR, SO GOOD"

Jürgen Klopp and his assistants Peter Krawietz and Pepijn Lijnders have extended their contracts with the club until the summer of 2024 – here's what the boss says about the next four-and-a-half years


L.F.C.
AXA

CONGRATULATIONS ON AGREEING A NEW CONTRACT WITH THE CLUB – WHY WAS THIS THE RIGHT DECISION FOR YOU?

It's actually so easy but then in the end so difficult to explain, maybe – because it just feels right.

So far, we had an incredible journey together, each and every day felt so special. There were not only good days, obviously, there were some average days involved as well: big defeats, big wins, all that stuff. But it's really about that I wanted to stay a part of this club, that's how it is.

Our relationship is pretty special so we want it to continue. I spoke to Pete and Pep, they saw it exactly the same way, then the decisive people started talking and they agreed, so it's really, really nice to know that we will stay here longer. Perfect. Perfect news for the three of us, for our families, it's really, really nice.

JUST HOW IMPORTANT WAS IT FOR PETE AND PEP TO AGREE AS WELL?

Without an agreement from the boys, nothing would have happened. That's how it is. It was always like this in my life, that I said first and foremost the assistants have to be happy and then we can talk. That was no different here.

I worked together with Pete for, wow, I don't even know, maybe 20 years in different kinds. With Pep, four years with a little break when he went to Holland. We know each other, we trust each other, we help each other a lot.

Without them I would not even be half the manager I am and that's cool. Plus Vitor [Matos], plus John [Achterberg], plus Jack [Robinson]. They will stay here as well of course, they signed new contracts only recently. So it's a perfect situation...

It was so important to me that my staff also agreed these new deals. Without them being prepared to make the same commitment, quite frankly I would not have been able to do this. I am blessed to be surrounded by so many amazing staff; honestly, I feel the luckiest manager in the world in this regard.

Peter and Pep have contributed just as much as I have to the development of this team and although as the manager, many may see me as the face of the club, their input and expertise is invaluable to what we're looking to achieve...

But going beyond Pete and Pep, these new deals are a mark of not only our collective belief in our project, but also a sign of our development so far.

We always say it is a collective effort at Melwood. It's not just about me, the players or my coaching team – everybody who works here contributes in their own way to what happens on the field and how we have progressed as a club. That's why we have everybody's names on a wall in a corridor here.

We all share the same vision and we all share the same belief in the way Liverpool FC continues to move forward.

IT'S IMPORTANT TO HIGHLIGHT THAT COLLECTIVE APPROACH, ISN'T IT, EVERYBODY PULLING IN THE SAME DIRECTION...

That's the main reason why we feel so good here. In the moment it's a very good time obviously. We had a more difficult time in the past, we will maybe have a more difficult time in the future. It's not about that, it's not about hoping it will stay like this, it's about being ready to work for it.

Yes, the work together with Mike [Gordon] and Michael [Edwards] is exceptional. You could ask everybody at Melwood, everybody enjoys coming in here every morning and it will be the same in Kirkby when we go there. It will be a difficult moment when we leave Melwood actually but we are looking forward to Kirkby as well. That's all good.

When you sign a contract now, you know there will be some difficult decisions to make in the future, but I really think after knowing the club so long now – and being responsible for it as well – that we are the right people to do that, not somebody else, a new manager coming in and making difficult decisions and people are not happy with it, then the whole project gets a little setback. That's not necessary. I really think we are the right people to do that in the next, for now, four-and-a-half years.

We are pretty much in the middle of the contract. It's cool. We are ready for that. We know about the situation and we are ready to face the situation and sort it where necessary.





IT'S YOUR FIFTH SEASON AS LIVERPOOL MANAGER. YOU TOUCHED UPON THIS IN YOUR FIRST ANSWER, BUT WHAT A JOURNEY IT'S BEEN SO FAR...

Crazy, huh? It's like this [clicks fingers], gone. But it was intense, it was great, it was beautiful obviously with the massive day in Madrid which we had this year, this summer. We had pretty much everything – we had finals, we had defeats, wins, emotions more than I think useful sometimes and legal as well!

Great nights at Anfield, great away games, it was everything. Fantastic players coming in, sensational players left us but in a good way. All that what you wish and you think about your football club, you think: okay, that's how it should be.

The news is, I would say, 80 or 90 per cent of the time rather positive. Good, because football should be like this, that when our supporters think about Liverpool, it should be difficult for them to avoid a smile. Hopefully we can collect a lot of these moments in the future.





CAN YOU DESCRIBE HOW THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE TEAM MAKES YOU FEEL? AS YOU SAY, IT HAS BEEN A JOURNEY OVER THE LAST FOUR YEARS OR SO...

Very, very good. Mostly in the beginning it was difficult. We came in five, six days before the first game [in October 2015]. Everybody knows that it's not really possible to change something but on the other side, everybody is hoping for it anyway – if not after five days then after eight or nine for the next game and then [an] incredibly busy period started pretty much immediately in November, December, January, so it was of course difficult.

The boys did really well, adapted really quick to the things we asked for. It was obviously a good team, it wasn't as people made it because of the situation in the table. It was not a miracle or whatever. But we went to two finals, so that was good and the first step.

We had to implement a specific style of play – it was pretty wild, very aggressive, highest intensity and all that stuff. Then of course [it] settles step by step. The good thing is when you are a long-term manager in a club, you can make different steps and you can always learn from the last season and that's what we always did and the boys did as well.

So yes, we made changes, we brought players in but not massively, rather punctual and we say, 'Here we need, here we need, here we need'. We have quite a good percentage of proper hits, I would say, I really like that. All the boys we brought in had a massive impact – not only quality-wise, their characters are exceptional.

We don't feel we are close before the end, we feel rather we are, max, not even halfway where we want to be. But yes, we adapted every year to the ways other teams faced us because in the beginning we were more or less a counter-pressing, counter-attacking team. We had to develop to a possession team without losing the strength in the other things that worked sometimes without any problems.

Sometimes it took a while but, meanwhile, our possession, we are 100 per cent on the next level. So many things which we could work together on.

It's like when you go on a pre-season and pre-seasons nowadays are really difficult because you don't have the group together. I think we had the full group together for like four days in the pre-season, which is absolutely crazy. If we then have a completely new team with six, seven, eight, nine players then you need a season to adapt.

We needed a season to adapt but physically rather than tactically because we didn't change a lot of things obviously, we just wanted to make little steps in the right direction and that's possible with a group you work together with longer. That's what happened. And so far, so good.

The FSG statement

"We are absolutely delighted we have been able to reach an agreement with Jürgen – as well as Peter and Pep – on extending their time with the club. As we are sure our supporters would agree, it is truly wonderful news and we are all extremely thrilled, not only professionally, but personally too.

"We feel this represents one of the big moments of our stewardship of Liverpool Football Club so far as we believe there is no better manager than Jürgen. The decision also keeps with the club's overall strategy of building from a position of strength.

"It means Jürgen will oversee the ongoing transition from Melwood to the new Kirkby training base as the club continues to pursue a vision of being elite in all facets of the industry.

"It also provides us with continuity with the existing football operations management structure, overseen by sporting director Michael Edwards, whose input into the project cannot be overestimated. He has been – and will continue to be – as indispensably important as anyone else to the direction of Liverpool Football Club. In Jürgen and Michael we are blessed with world-class leadership.

"This is a collective partnership that has seen the club reach and then re-establish itself as an elite performer at home and abroad.

"Back in 2015 we used the phrase 'ideal fit' when we appointed Jürgen. This continues to apply today and, if anything, the circumstances make it more pertinent. We consider him to be the best there is.

"If Liverpool Football Club were looking to appoint the most outstanding, elite manager for our current status today, Jürgen would be the first choice – no question.

"We believe this deal cements a relationship built on trust and mutual benefit: Jürgen has delivered for LFC and LFC has delivered for Jürgen.

"Both parties have come to the conclusion that by continuing to work together and build on the work of the last four years, the opportunity exists to maximise each other's potential."

From principal owner John Henry, chairman Tom Werner and FSG president Mike Gordon.



IT'S NOT JUST ON THE PITCH THAT THE CLUB HAS DEVELOPED, EITHER. OFF THE PITCH THERE HAS BEEN THE STADIUM EXPANSION, THE NEW TRAINING GROUND, EVERYTHING IS MOVING FORWARD HERE...

That's it. That's exactly what you need because being ready in the moment doesn't mean being ready in the future, that's how it is. You should not only think about the past, you should not only think about the future, but you should not forget both of them.

In this club I think nobody doubts how we love our history and our past, and we really like the present, but the future has to be bright as well. And yes, the club supports us, FSG supports us sensationally: building a new stand, planning another new stand, building a new training ground pretty much all in the same moment and building a new team [too]. That's incredible.

If you would know them, they are fantastic people as well. It's Mike, of course, who is first and foremost responsible for us here but also John [Henry] and Tom [Werner] when they heard about the agreement, we had phone-calls and messages were exchanged and they are really with a full heart here at Liverpool.

They don't live here but pretty much that's the only thing they don't do, everything else is about LFC so that's really cool and exactly what we need. We want to go, we had to go, to the Academy to bring it closer together because that will be our future.

In the moment we have four fantastic players really close to the first team: Rhian Brewster, Curtis Jones, Harvey Elliott and Neco Williams, plus we have Caoimhin [Kelleher] as a goalkeeper. That's five boys who I would have no problem to line up tomorrow if needed.

Curtis now had his first [Premier League] minutes and of course they have time as well to develop, but that's four or five and we want to increase that number in the future.

With Brexit and stuff like this then things will change, and for the youth departments as well – where can we get the players from? So these players need a perspective and they need to feel 'if I go to Liverpool then I have the best chance compared to all the other top six clubs', for example, to make my first steps in the Premier League.

That's all very important and we are constantly thinking about 'how can we solve the problem today and tomorrow?' but we are also thinking always about 'how can this club look when we are not here anymore?' Because this club is not only bigger than pretty much all other clubs, it's bigger than us for sure as well, so it needs to have a bright future and we are all working on that.

JUST A WORD ON THIS CURRENT FIRST-TEAM SQUAD AT LIVERPOOL FOOTBALL CLUB: IT'S A SPECIAL GROUP OF PLAYERS, ISN'T IT?

Yeah, it's great to see. Last month we were at Alder Hey and I couldn't be more proud than in these moments when you see how the boys react in difficult moments. I'm 52 and it's difficult for me to face these kind of situations but you have really young boys and how they go there, they are just lovely people, it's really nice.

But then on the other side they are proper warriors when we face the next opponent, that's how it is and how it should be.

We don't think that we are only close to our 100 per cent but we try to come closer and closer and closer. That's what we said after the Champions League final, after the first one, after the second one: this is not the final chapter for this team, there are a lot more to write and we want to be really influential in that.

We don't know where it will lead us to, but in this moment... I don't know the teams before I came in, but it's one of the teams who are most committed to this club and it's really, really nice to be part of that.

FINALLY, FOR THE FANS WHO HAVE BEEN ON THIS JOURNEY WITH US SO FAR, WHAT WOULD YOU SAY TO THEM IN REGARD TO THIS NEWS?

Thank you! Thank you very much for each and every second since we are together here and let's just carry on. It was not too bad so far, let's try to make it even better in the future.



“WE ARE LIVERPOOL. THIS MEANS MORE”

Jürgen Klopp

WATCH NOW
liverpoolfc.com/TMM

WE ARE LIVERPOOL.
THIS MEANS MORE.





OX NEWS

Midfielder Alex Oxlade-Chamberlain talks candidly about winning the Club World Cup, fighting to retain that Champions League crown, and scoring Kop-end goals

Interview: Chris McLoughlin

When Liverpool ran out onto the Anfield pitch to face Wolverhampton Wanderers in the final game of 2019 they did so with a new addition to their kit.

Situated between the club crest and New Balance logo, on top of one of the white pinstripes that intersect the deep red shirts, was a gleaming new badge. Like the golden ticket discovered by Charlie Bucket when he opened a classic Wonka Bar, it was a thing of beauty. A status symbol that glimmered underneath the Anfield floodlights and described Liverpool Football Club in previously unused terms.

'FIFA WORLD CHAMPIONS 2019' it stated beneath the newest trophy to appear on the Champions Wall at Melwood. Seeing it felt better than good. It felt brilliant. As ending a year as European and world champions should feel.

Of course the FIFA Club World Cup has its detractors and deriders. Former Manchester United midfielder Paul Scholes, who won it in 2008 against little-known Ecuadorians LDU Quito, glibly said winning a badminton medal was more important to him, but were you really expecting a Mancunian rival to talk a Liverpool success up?

For those intrepid travelling Kopites inside the Khalifa International Stadium in Qatar on Saturday 22 December, and most certainly the Liverpool players who defeated Copa Libertadores champions Flamengo 1-0 after extra-time, being crowned champions of the world felt huge. Perhaps even bigger than anyone truly anticipated.

Alex Oxlade-Chamberlain started the final against the wiley Brazilians, but didn't finish it. An ankle injury suffered in the 75th minute forced him off and the midfielder only made it onto the winners' podium aided by a set of crutches and a protective boot.

The sight of the Ox waving those crutches in the air during the post-match celebrations both on the pitch and inside the dressing-room was heartening to see and another indication of what being a club world champion means. So why does if feel like the FIFA Club World Cup lacks appreciation in the UK?

Flamengo took an estimated 15,000 fans to Doha from Brazil – 10,000 of them on charter flights alone – with Brazilian journalists reporting that the whole country would stop to watch the game against Liverpool as it was the biggest in Flamengo's history. They could complete the treble of Campeonato Brasileiro Serie A (the Brazilian league), Copa Libertadores (South America's Champions League) and FIFA Club World Cup for the first time.

Liverpool, on the other hand, could become the first-ever English club to win the Champions League, UEFA Super Cup and FIFA Club World Cup in the same year, yet that barely got a mention ahead of the trip to the Middle East.

So, as I sat with Alex inside the plush, marbled-floored St Regis hotel in Doha's West Bay, Liverpool's base for their week in Qatar, I asked for his view on why the FIFA Club World Cup seemed to fly under the radar somewhat in Europe compared to South America?

"There's not much awareness about the Club World Cup in our country for sure," he said. "When your team is in it then you get behind it, but when we won the Champions League it probably wasn't on everyone's minds to think: I can't wait to get out there to Qatar to see them play in the Club World Cup.

"I don't want to come across as arrogant or big-headed, but I think the prize of potentially beating the European champions gives it a higher pedigree in other countries on other continents.

"A lot of those players don't get the opportunity to play the likes of Real Madrid, Barcelona, Bayern Munich or ourselves in any club competition other than the Club World Cup. Historically, the best players play in Europe at some point in their career at one of the big teams in Spain, Germany, Italy or England.



"So, when you speak to the South American guys – or the African guys – in our squad, their route as footballers was always to get to Europe to play for one of those teams. So they probably hold the attraction of playing against the champions of Europe a bit higher than we do the other way around.

"That's not to be disrespectful, it's just the way the footballing world has gravitated towards the Champions League. That what makes the Club World Cup bigger in other countries than it is over here, but at the same time if you're lucky enough to qualify for the competition then it becomes massive to try to win it.

"It's not every day you get to win the Champions League and maybe, because we don't have English teams winning the Champions League every year, it's why it isn't as well-regarded.

"My friends didn't even know when the Monterrey game was or what time it was kicking off. They never miss a minute when Liverpool play – they're always checking in – so that summed it up.

"It's probably bigger in Spain, historically, with the dominance







WE WENT TO QATAR FOR A REASON AND IT WAS IMPORTANT THAT WE DID WHAT WE SET OUT TO ACHIEVE



Real Madrid and Barcelona have had in Europe, but we were lucky enough to come to Qatar and it is massive to win it.

"We might never get the chance to play in it again. Hopefully that's not the case, but it's a possibility and the main thing was it didn't change our focus on everything else. We came to Qatar for a reason and it was important that we did what we set out to achieve."

That FIFA Club World Cup success was the third medal of Oxlade-Chamberlain's Liverpool career having been an unused substitute in the Champions League final against Spurs in Madrid and started against Chelsea in the UEFA Super Cup final in Istanbul.

Given he has also won three FA Cups as an Arsenal player, plus three Community Shields with the Gunners, his next winners' medal will be the 10th of the 26-year-old midfielder's career.

Adding to that collection is a motivation that drives Oxlade-Chamberlain on. He's very much a 'no regrets' kind of guy and



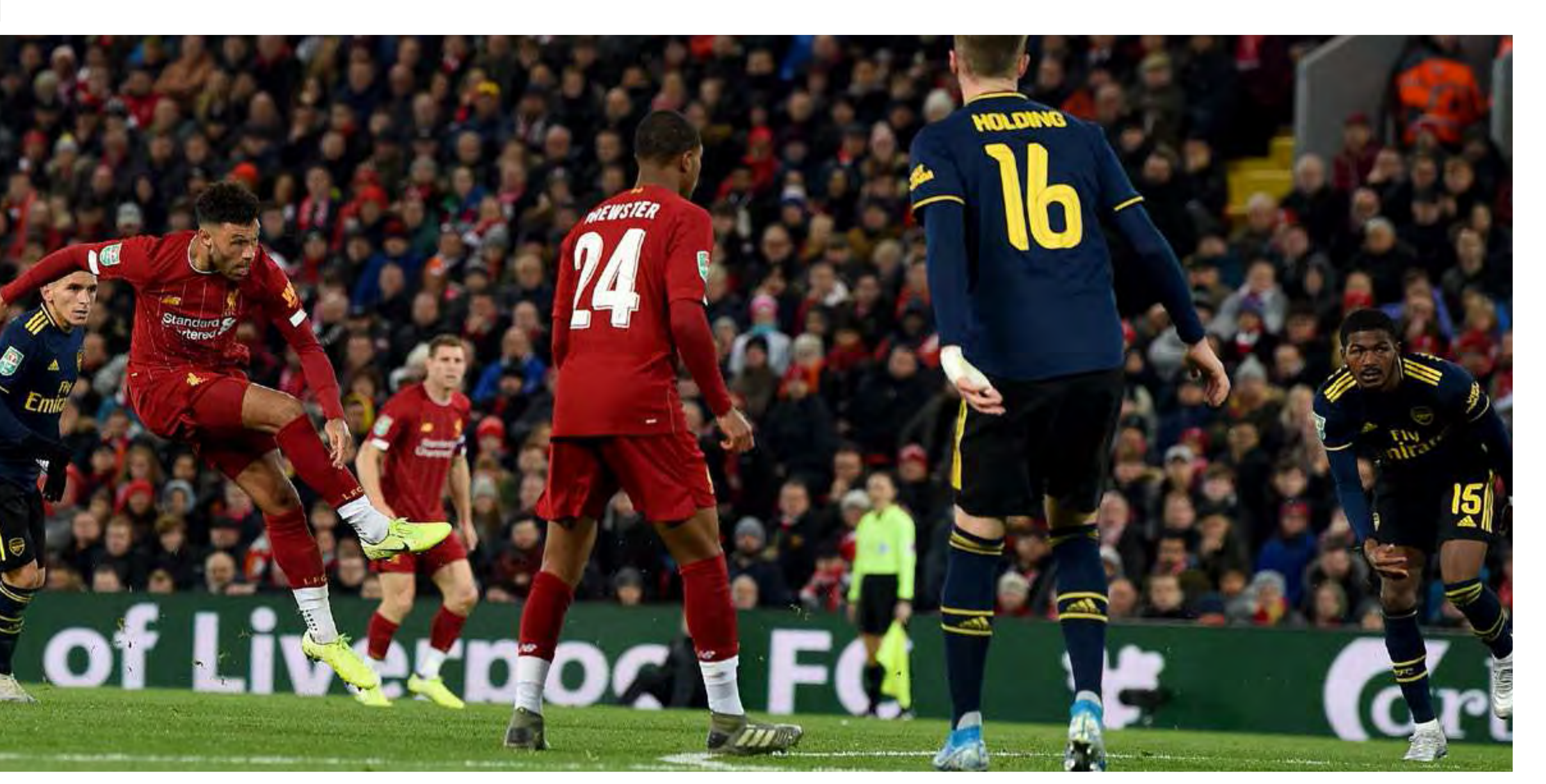
makes it clear that he wants to take every opportunity to win silverware that comes Liverpool's way.

"Winning medals is massive for me. I've been around for a few years now and I was at a top club in Arsenal that, with the squad we had, didn't reach the heights we would have liked to. We won three FA Cups, but we didn't manage to get as far as we would have liked in the Champions League or Premier League.

"Now I'm lucky enough to be in a team that is this good, with a manager who is this good, and with a fan-base that being successful means so much to – not just in Liverpool, but around the whole world. It's not something I want to pass up on or miss out on.

"There have been times when players have been in teams that haven't quite managed to win as much as they wanted to. They must look back and think: that team should have done this or should have done that.

I'M PRIVILEGED TO BE PART OF THIS GROUP OF PLAYERS AND I DON'T WANT TO MISS OUT ON OPPORTUNITIES THAT COME AROUND







"This is a team that has now got experience of winning the Champions League and the Super Cup, and Club World Cup off the back of that. We've got that experience behind us and I feel like this is a team that is hungry to keep going to win more. For me, that's definitely important.

"I'm privileged to be part of this group of players and I don't want to miss out on opportunities that come around."

Becoming the first Liverpool team to retain the European Cup since Bob Paisley's side did so in 1978 following their maiden success in 1977 is high up on the priority list. While trying to win a first league title since 1990 attracts all the hype and headlines, the resumption of Champions League football next month has not gone unmentioned in the Liverpool dressing-room.

The players have a 'one-game-at-a-time' mantra instilled by their manager, but in the relaxed setting of the team hotel in Doha I asked Ox to look forward to the mouthwatering Champions League clash against Diego Simeone's Atletico Madrid.

The first leg takes place at the Wanda Metropolitano, a venue that obviously holds happy memories for all Reds, so does he think the fact that Liverpool won the Champions League final in Atleti's stadium will have any bearing when the Reds return to Madrid in February?

"The boys have all been talking about going back to that stadium in Madrid," he smiled. "We don't want to talk about that factor too much, though, because they'll be wanting to make it very different to when we went there in June and lifted the trophy.

"They'll be thinking: this is our home, we're going to make sure it isn't as nice for them. So I don't want to say too much about that, but of course it is nice to go back to somewhere where you've got good memories and are a little bit familiar with.

"It sounds simple, but sometimes when you go to an away ground you've never been to before it feels different, it feels hostile, it

doesn't feel nice and you don't know why. Even a different pitch can throw you off, or the atmosphere in a stadium can be a factor, such as what we faced in Napoli and what visiting teams experience at Anfield.

"I didn't go to Belgrade last year, but I remember the lads talking about the long tunnel and the hostility there when we played Red Star, so little things like that can make a game feel slightly different and knock you off your stride.

"Having the familiarity of being to Atletico Madrid's stadium last season, and achieving something special there, is something we can take into the game, but we know this time we'll be going into their home, their backyard. It'll be a different Wanda Metropolitano to the Wanda Metropolitano we faced in the summer and we've got to make sure we realise that.

"It's a different test, a difficult test and the sort of draw you look at and know it'll be tough. So we need to get down to business when we go there because if we want to win the Champions League, like we did in Madrid last year, we might as well start by beating one of the best teams in it this year and keep our momentum going."

Oxlade-Chamberlain headed into 2020 with five goals to his name this season, three of them in the Champions League against Genk plus a dipping volley at home to Arsenal in the Carabao Cup and a Premier League strike at Bournemouth.

That equals his best tally in a Liverpool shirt – he struck five in season 2017/18 before suffering that injury against AS Roma in the Champions League semi-final at Anfield – and his collection has included two absolute crackers.

His Kop-end volley in the crazy 5-5 draw against his former club Arsenal would normally win any individual goal-of-the-season competition, but it came from a player who had already netted a goal of the highest technical quality during the 4-1 Champions League group stage victory in Genk.

Ox had already opened the scoring in Belgium that night with an early low strike from outside the box, but his – and Liverpool's – second goal was something else.

Bobby Firmino pulled the ball back to him on the edge of the box and, using the outside of his right boot, he almost prodded a rising shot that sent the ball spinning goalwards until it found the net via the underside of the crossbar. It was the first time he'd ever scored twice in the same game for the Reds and must surely have been the best goal of his Liverpool career?



THE INTENSITY OF SMASHING ONE IN IN FRONT OF THE KOP, THERE'S NO BETTER FEELING – GOALS LIKE THAT GIVE A BUZZ LIKE NOTHING ELSE



"My second goal in Genk was different. It's a goal I can appreciate a lot more because of the skill of it. The technique that I tried doesn't come off all the time, but for me the goals I scored against Man City and Arsenal in front of the Kop are my favourites.

"The intensity of smashing one in in front of the Kop, there's no better feeling. The feeling I got instantly off the back of the Arsenal goal...[he pauses for a moment to relive the memory]. For me, that's what I live for.

"I used to watch Stevie Gerrard smash them in in front of the Kop and imagine the feeling that would give me. Goals like that give me a buzz like nothing else.

"The Genk goal was a bit like 'ooooh, it's gone in'. It caught me a bit by surprise that I tried it and it actually went in! Afterwards I've probably appreciated it a lot more, but when I watch back the Man City goals and the Arsenal goal I get goosebumps. They're the ones I enjoy scoring more."

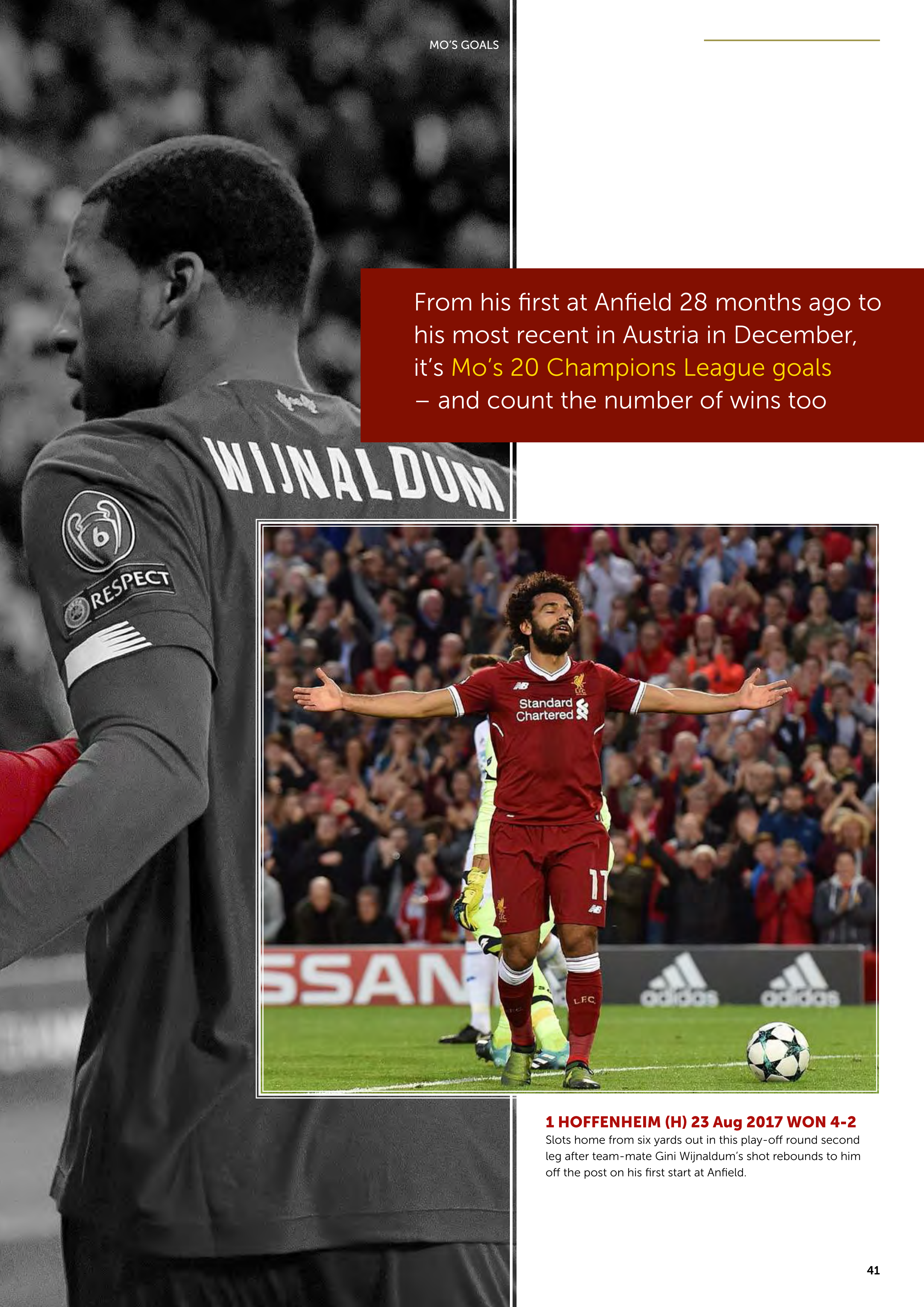
Hopefully there is more to come from Alex Oxlade-Chamberlain, both in terms of goals and medals, as there's another badge featuring a golden lion that every Kopite wants to see on the Liverpool shirt.

Fingers crossed that 2020 gives us something to roar about...


MANÉ
10
Standard Chartered
L.F.C.
15
3



SALAH SALAH WHAT'S THE SCORE?



From his first at Anfield 28 months ago to his most recent in Austria in December, it's Mo's 20 Champions League goals – and count the number of wins too

1 HOFFENHEIM (H) 23 Aug 2017 WON 4-2

Slots home from six yards out in this play-off round second leg after team-mate Gini Wijnaldum's shot rebounds to him off the post on his first start at Anfield.



2 SEVILLA (H) 13 Sept 2017
DREW 2-2

Wins a challenge on the edge of the Sevilla box before firing a left-footed shot goalwards that loops into the net off the foot of centre-half Simon Kjaer.

3 MARIBOR (A)
17 Oct 2017
WON 7-0

Nets his first Champions League away goal after running onto Bobby Firmino's pass inside the penalty area and side-footing the ball across the Maribor goalkeeper.

4 MARIBOR (A) 17 Oct 2017 WON 7-0

Meets Alberto Moreno's low cross at the same time as Firmino but gets the final touch to find the net from close-range.

5 MARIBOR (H) 1 Nov 2017 WON 3-0

Darts in front of his man at the near post to guide Trent Alexander-Arnold's whipped cross into the Kop-end net.



6 SPARTAK MOSCOW (H)
6 Dec 2017
WON 7-0

Dummies his way past two Spartak defenders by pretending to shoot with his left foot only to fire the ball high into the net with his right.



7 PORTO (A)
14 Feb 2018
WON 5-0

Remember this worldie? Juggles the ball in the six-yard box with his right foot, left foot and head before prodding home after James Milner's shot rebounds off the Porto post.



8 MANCHESTER CITY (H)
4 Apr 2018
WON 3-0

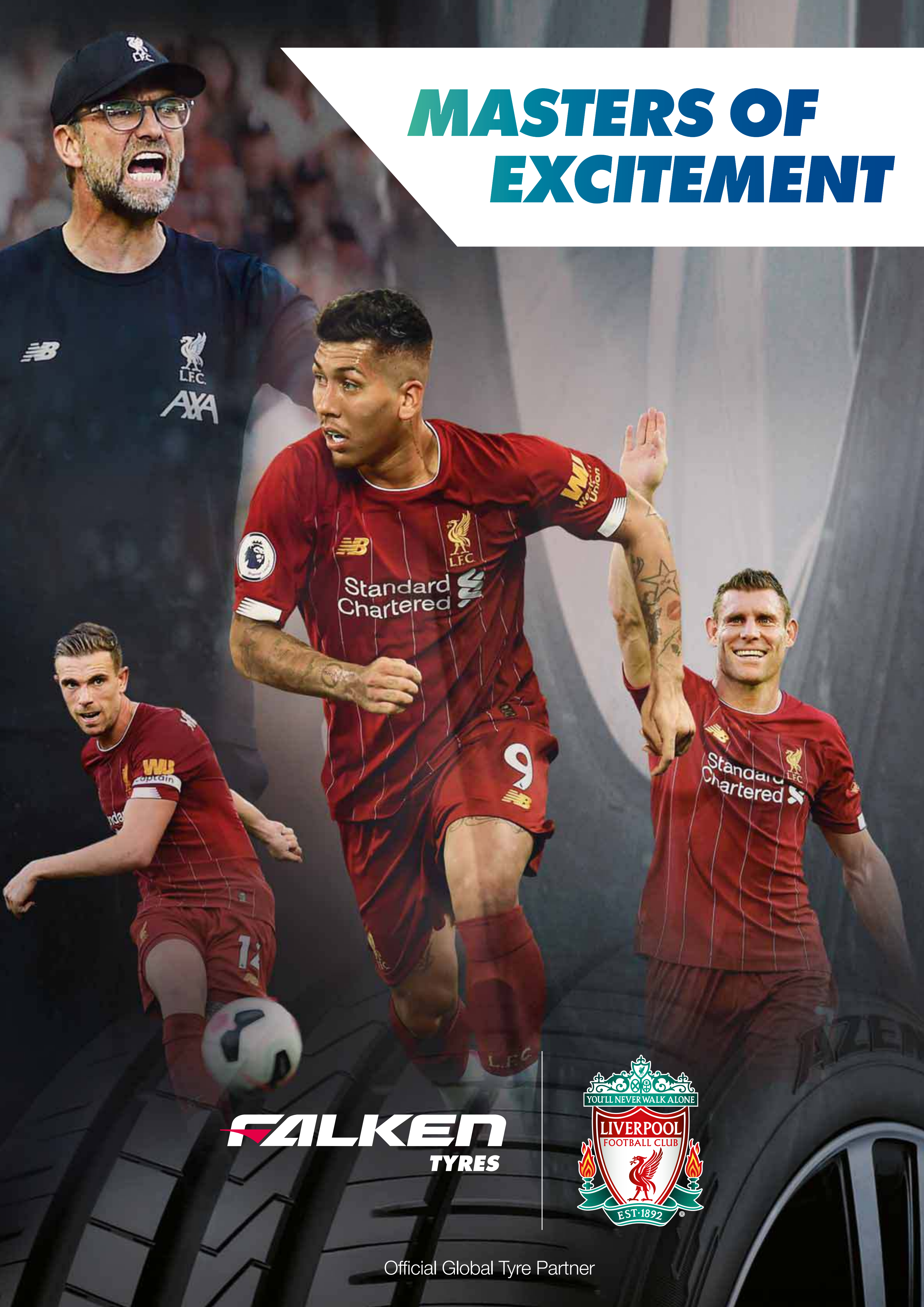
Slams the ball into the net from close-range after Firmino takes advantage of Kyle Walker's fluffed clearance to tee him up.

9 MANCHESTER CITY (A) 10 Apr 2018 WON 2-1

Chips a sand-wedge style shot over Nicolas Otamendi into the side of the net after the ball squirms loose when keeper Ederson dives at the feet of Sadio Mane.

10 ROMA (H) 24 Apr 2018 WON 5-2

Cuts inside onto his left foot and curls an unstoppable shot past Alisson that clips the underside of the crossbar on the way in.



MASTERS OF EXCITEMENT
FALKEN TYRES
YOU'LL NEVER WALK ALONE
LIVERPOOL FOOTBALL CLUB
EST·1892
Official Global Tyre Partner

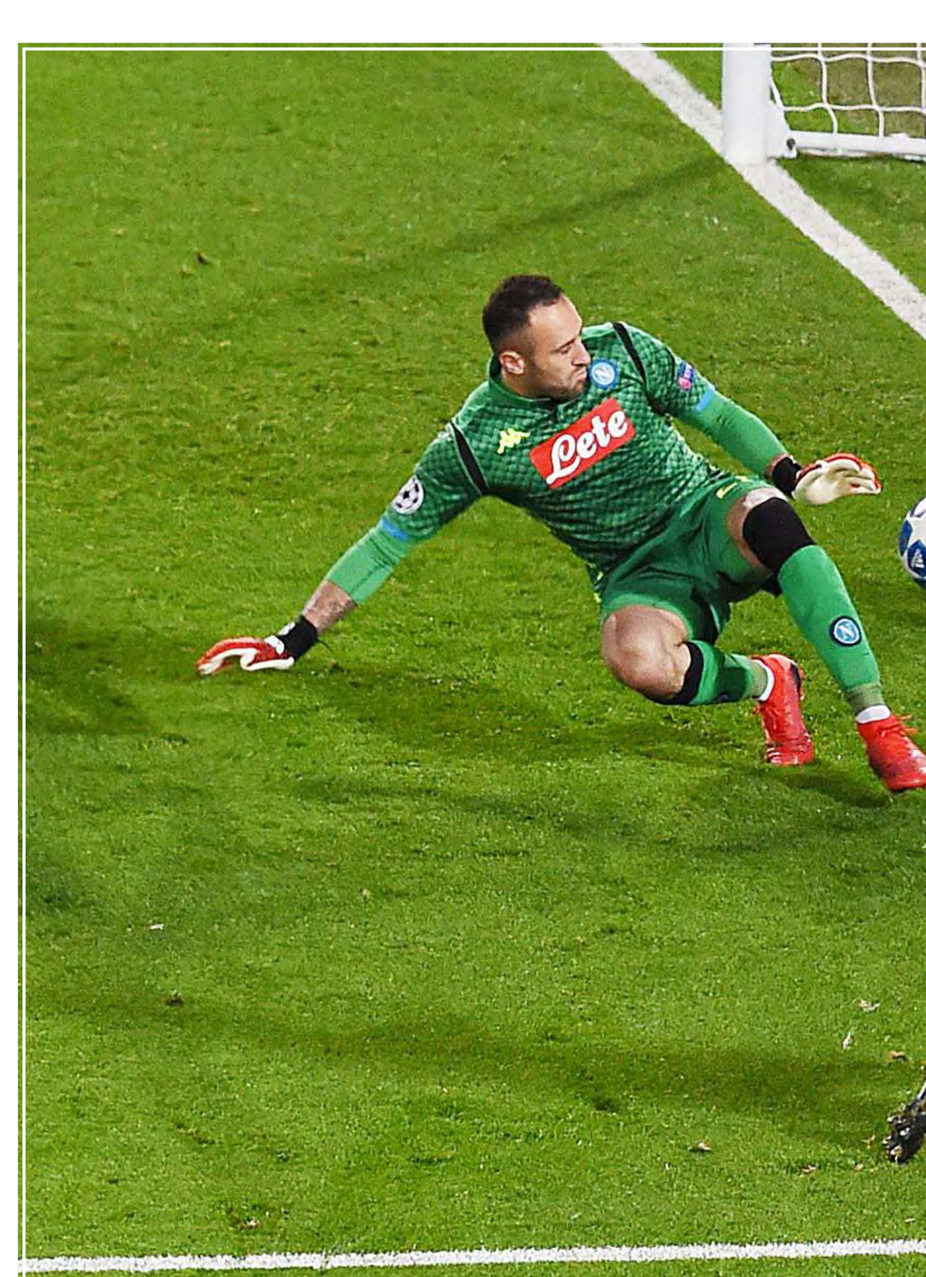
11 ROMA (H) 24 Apr 2018 WON 5-2

For his second of the night, runs clean through on goal from Firmino's pass and dinks the ball over Alisson as he rushes out to meet him.

12 RED STAR BELGRADE (H) 24 Oct 2018 WON 4-0

Takes Milner's pass into his stride and wraps a rising right-footed shot past Red Star keeper Milan Borjan at his near post.







13 RED STAR BELGRADE (H)
24 Oct 2018 WON 4-0

Scores his 50th goal for Liverpool by blasting a penalty – the first spot-kick he has netted in the Champions League – down the centre of the goal.





14 NAPOLI (H) 11 Dec 2018 WON 1-0

Dribbles past Kalidou Koulibaly inside the area and catches goalkeeper David Ospina out by nutmegging him at the near-post to send the Reds through to the last 16.



15 PORTO (A) 17 Apr 2019 WON 4-1

Scampers clear to latch onto Alexander-Arnold's slide-rule pass and composedly places the ball past the onrushing goalkeeper.



16 TOTTENHAM HOTSPUR (Madrid) 1 June 2019 WON 2-0

Holds his nerve to beat Hugo Lloris from the penalty-spot to put Liverpool 1-0 up after just two minutes of the Champions League final in Madrid.



Success begins off the pitch.
AXA, proud sponsor of the Liverpool FC Training Kit.
AXA
YOU'LL NEVER WALK ALONE
LIVERPOOL FOOTBALL CLUB
EST·1892
Official Training Kit Partner
Know You Can
axa.co.uk

17 SALZBURG (H) 2 Oct 2019 WON 4-3

Reacts quickest, after Firmino's header is parried, to turn a shot underneath the body of Cican Stankovic for his first UCL goal at Anfield in 2019.

18 SALZBURG (H) 2 Oct 2019 WON 4-3

Sneaks between two Salzburg defenders to run onto Firmino's deft header and guide the ball beyond Stankovic to give Liverpool a 4-3 victory.



#MEETGINI at Melwood

with the LFC Foundation Fundraising Sweepstake

By making a donation to the club's official charity, you'll be entered for a chance to win this amazing experience for you and a guest.

Play for as little as £10, or donate more to earn rewards like exclusive memorabilia or LFC tickets!

Only £10
for two chances to win!

Enter at **www.charitystars.com/wijnaldum**

T&Cs apply

In support of the LFC Foundation.
Creating life changing opportunities for children and young people.



19 GENK (A)
23 Oct 2019
WON 4-1

Receives Sadio Mane's pass and shows strength and skill to turn between Genk's Colombian centre-halves before clipping a right-footed shot in off the inside of the post.





20 SALZBURG (A)
10 Dec 2019
WON 2-0

Beats keeper Stankovic to Jordan Henderson's through-ball wide on the right before somehow side-footing the ball into the net from the acutest of angles. That's 20 so far – only Steven Gerrard with 30 has scored more in a red shirt.



THE BEST TWO FULL-BACKS IN THE WORLD

That's not just the partisan opinion of this magazine – it's the considered verdict of players and pundits alike


ALEXANDER-ARNOLD
66

On Friday 8 November last year, 48 hours before Liverpool welcomed Manchester City to Anfield in the Premier League, manager Jürgen Klopp was asked by the club's website just how important Trent Alexander-Arnold and Andy Robertson had become to way his team plays.

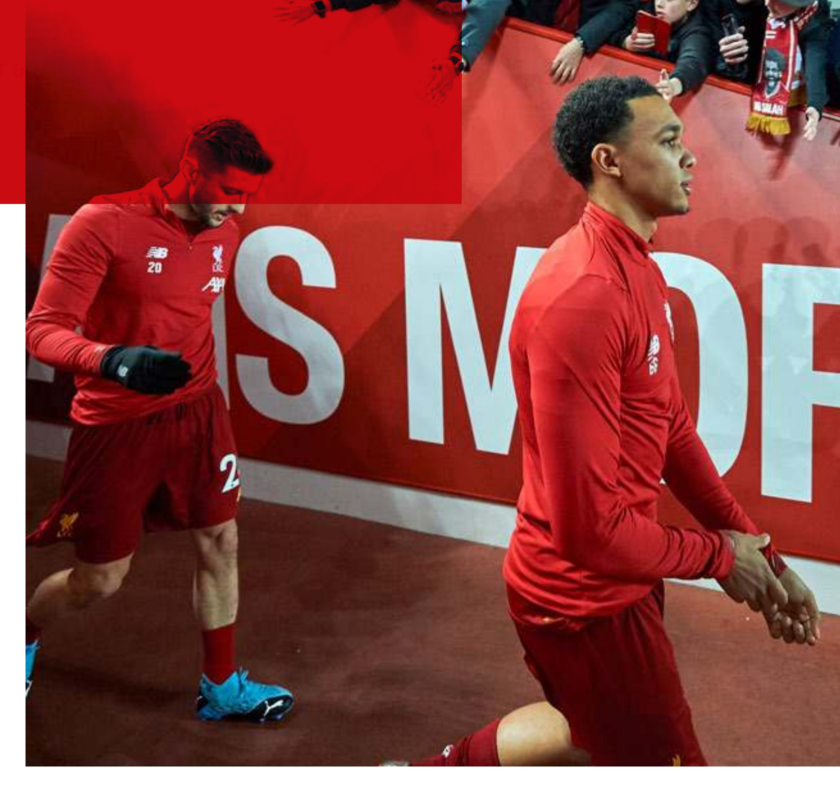
"It's part of our game, part of our plan, but it is not the only plan," he replied. "Modern football is like this: you have to be really strong on the wings, however you do it, because the goal is in the centre of the pitch and the area around the goal is the most crowded area, so you have to find a way to go through. That's in-behind, you pass it on the wings or you try to find little spaces between their lines. That's how football is."

It explains why Trent and Robbo are comfortably in the Premier League's top five for individual touches of the ball this season, and in Liverpool's top three for both passes and minutes on the pitch, alongside Virgil van Dijk.

The boss went on: "The wider you make the pitch, the bigger the spaces in the centre. That's why we try – you have to be a force from pretty much everywhere.

"We try to use the skills of the two boys: good crosses, speed, very lively, very brave and very fit endurance-wise, so they can do the defensive transition as well."

Against City the pair combined to lethal effect to create Liverpool's second, much-celebrated goal, headed home by Mo Salah. *Guardian* reporter Barney Ronay mused: "Alexander-Arnold was, once again, sublime here. His range of passing from right-back is a thing of beauty. His calmness, his physical strength, his ability to cover the ground allow him to dominate his flank. He sees the whole picture from inside his own half.



"One to pass and one to run: Robertson was an urgent, thrusting menace on the other flank, a £7m player coached into phenomenon at this level... It was Liverpool's full-backs who dictated the rhythms of this victory."

The games came thick and fast. There was a hard-fought win for Liverpool away to Crystal Palace before Trent sat out most of the Champions League game with Napoli at Anfield four days later, returning for the home win over Brighton the following

Saturday, after which ex-Reds defender Gary Gillespie remarked on Robertson's consistency: "You can never play well for the whole season, but you can keep doing all the right things at the right times to get results.

"Left-back is one area where we don't have a like-for-like replacement, but that burden of responsibility never seems to faze him. His stamina and energy levels never dip. He's strong and aggressive, and even when he loses the ball he's closing down the opposition and putting them under pressure to win it back."

Then came the Merseyside derby at which our photographer focused his lens on both full-backs for this feature. Alexander-Arnold, switching to the left flank and surging forward on the counter-attack, provided the perfectly-weighted inside-flick for Sadio Mane to sweep home the fourth of Liverpool's five goals.

It meant that since the start of last season Trent had provided more Premier League assists than any other player, with 18 – fifteen coming in the calendar year of 2019. Up to and including the win at home over Sheffield United on Thursday 2 January,

→





Only Manchester City's Kevin De Bruyne had contributed more in season 2019/20, with twelve compared to Trent's eight. There were six for Robertson by that stage too.

Last season, 2018/19, the duo delivered 23 assists in the Premier League, accounting for a third of the goals the Reds scored and the first time two defenders from the same team had ever reached double-figures in one campaign.

Before last season's Champions League final, the club website ran an article by esteemed football writer Henry Winter who claimed that Alexander-Arnold and Robertson were "redefining the art of full-back play."

He continued: "As well as ability, what the pair share is a formidable work-ethic...total determination [and] an unquenchable desire to achieve more and more. The best never rest. They keep chasing more.

"It is the intensity, the pressing, racing back and defending, constantly meeting the demands of a prodigiously demanding job with the wide players, Mo Salah and Sadio Mane, frequently moving inside, that set Liverpool's full-backs apart. They are a mix of silk, steel and stamina...



"In terms of testing a body's physical limits, and a mind's concentration levels, there are few more testing roles, yet Liverpool's full-backs thrive on the challenge."

The plaudits have kept coming this season. Former skipper Steven Gerrard to the *Liverpool Echo*: "What we have in Trent and Robbo now, straightaway you would put them in the world-class bracket... We, as Liverpool fans, are blessed to have these two full-backs in the position because they are absolutely flying. They are so important and key to how Liverpool play and I just love watching them."

Another ex-captain, Graeme Souness, on Sky Sports: "Those full-backs are a big part of Liverpool's attacking plan. You don't see their names up there as goalscorers, but you see them providing the assists. It's the goalscorers and badge-kissers that make you think: what if they were out [injured]?' But Trent and Andy are equally important."

Erstwhile Reds forward Peter Crouch on the BBC: "With what they do for this Liverpool team, Robertson and Alexander-Arnold are re-defining the way full backs play."

And the last word from the man who has coached them to these levels of peak performance and new possibilities, the one and only Jürgen Klopp: "They are pretty good players, so they've done well so far." Indeed they have, boss, and then some.


TAGHeuer
Standard Chartered
66
26
International Academy
“ON KAI
Western Union


DON'T
BE SHY!



You're boarding a flight for a Champions League away game when one of the club photographers points his camera at you. Do you (a) stare straight ahead with your headphones on; (b) pretend you're on the phone; (c) allow yourself a friendly nod of acknowledgement; or (d) just pull a daft face?

JÜRGEN, WHY DO THE KIDS ALWAYS PLAY UP ON A FLIGHT? PLUS A RARE PIC OF HENDO AT AN AIRPORT WITHOUT A TROPHY IN HAND







VIRGIL AND ALI WERE HAPPY TO SEE US, ADS AND SHAQ LESS SO!

MO HOPING HE READ THE CABIN BAGGAGE SIZE GUIDE RIGHT

GINI, WHAT'S YOUR FAVOURITE EMOJI?

EVEN WHEN BOARDING A PLANE, TRENT WALKS UP THE STEPS ON THE RIGHT WITH ROBBO ON THE LEFT...



NABY REALISING HE'S NOT TIED HIS LACES AND THERE'S A VERY BIG STEP NEXT

MOUNTAIN



RESCUE

LFC's Under-19s secured their place in the knockout round of the UEFA Youth League with a dramatic victory in the shadow of the Alps →




Coach Barry Lewtas took his team to Napoli for the first group game

Romance might be in the air on Friday 14 February, but will Liverpool's Under-19s be feeling the love after the draw for the knockout stage of the UEFA Youth League?

The young Reds are through to the last 16 of the 2019/20 tournament, having negotiated a group stage that featured Napoli, Salzburg and Genk, just like the senior side with the same sequence of fixtures, but with only the group winners qualifying automatically.

Joining them, also as table-toppers, are Ajax, Atalanta, Bayern Munich, Benfica, Inter Milan, Juventus, and Real Madrid. Completing the draw will be the winners of eight play-offs between the group runners-up – Atletico Madrid, Borussia Dortmund, Club Brugge, Red Star Belgrade, Dinamo Zagreb, Lille, Lyon and Salzburg – and what are called the 'domestic champions path' winners – Derby County, Dynamo Kiev, Midtjylland, Porto (the holders), Rangers, Real Zaragoza, Rennes and Sheriff Tiraspol.

Liverpool topped their group with 13 points from four wins, one draw and one defeat. Their campaign began on Matchday One in mid-September, the second time in two seasons that an U19s team coached by Barry Lewtas would draw 1-1 away to Napoli, on an artificial surface 15 miles north of Naples. This time, though, the circumstances were reversed with the Reds and not Napoli getting a late equaliser.

There were six FA Youth Cup winners in Liverpool's starting XI plus 16-year-old Harvey Elliott, who made his Youth League debut wearing the no9 shirt in a fluid 3-4-3 system. Missing, though, was striker Paul Glatzel, who'd netted 28 goals in all competitions in 2018/19 but suffered a long-term knee injury in pre-season shortly before signing a new contract.

Ki-Jana Hoever, playing as a right-sided central defender in a back-three, struck a free-kick against the Napoli wall and also made a goal-saving block. But it was right wing-back Neco Williams who came closest to scoring, arriving at the far-post to head a cross from Yasser Larouci goalwards only to see it bounce off the bar.

Napoli took the lead in the 29th minute, striker Mancio sweeping past Youth League debutant keeper Ben Winterbottom, but Elliott should have levelled seven minutes after the interval. Midfielder Leighton Clarkson played in skipper Curtis Jones down the left but his ball was lifted over the bar by Elliott from close-range.




Matchday Three brought a 2-0 win in Genk

Rhian Brewster netted a late spot-kick to win the home game with Salzburg

Clarkson then struck the post after a neat one-two with Jake Cain, who recently signed his first pro contract with LFC, before the Reds lost Larouci to injury. It was the arrival of Huyton-born striker Layton Stewart from the bench that provided Liverpool with a cutting edge, and he improvised to get his foot to an Elliott cross at the far-post, turning the ball into the net.

It was the least that Lewtas' side deserved, having dominated the second half, and with Salzburg and Genk also drawing 1-1 in their Group E opener, all four sides were level in the table.

Matchday Two saw the Reds come from 2-1 down to beat Salzburg 4-2 at a chilly Totally Wicked Stadium in St Helens. The Reds took the lead in the fifth minute when Rhian Brewster drove forward from his own half before slipping the ball to Yasser Larouci who lashed into the net.

They had chances to increase their lead before Salzburg's Karim Adeymi beat the offside trap and rounded keeper Kuba to slot home, then after the break David Affengruber headed the visitors ahead from a corner and a coach-load of Salzburg fans celebrated by twirling their scarves in the air.

Lewtas switched from 3-4-3 to four-at-the-back and in the 78th minute, just as he was about to be substituted, Williams headed Larouci's cross home at the far-post to make it 2-2.

In the last ten minutes Reds skipper Luis Longstaff curled the ball into the bottom corner, then Brewster completed the comeback with a stoppage-time penalty after Elliott was hauled down in the box.

"The boys said in the dressing-room it was an aggressive game to play in but a good experience," said Lewtas. "We were well worth the win but had to work for it."

Between late October and early November the Reds played Genk away then at home. The game in Flanders was played in the shadow of Genk's Luminus Arena and it was Layton Stewart who again made the difference when he was clattered by the keeper then stepped up to convert the spot-kick – his eighth goal in 14 games in all competitions so far this season. Curtis Jones sealed the victory in the second half when Elliott played him through and he nutmegged the goalie.

The team headed into Matchday Four top of the group on seven



But Genk would stun the Reds with a 1-0 win here


Lewtas saw his young side score seven at home to Napoli







points with Salzburg and Genk on four and Napoli with one. But against expectations Genk won 1-0 at Kirkby with a goal three minutes into added-time.

With only the group winners going straight through, Liverpool now found themselves level with Genk and Salzburg on seven points.

Next up, Napoli at home. "We always go into every game with the mentality of trying to win – we will be ready," insisted Barry Lewtas before the action, and how right he was. His young Reds put seven past their opponents without reply, with Curtis Jones scoring a hat-trick and the other goals from Jake Cain, Elijah Dixon-Bonner and Luis Longstaff with two.

The win meant avoiding defeat at Salzburg on Matchday Six would secure that place in the last 16. Liverpool did just that – but only after conceding two first-half goals to their hosts in Austria.

A spirited fightback after the break was richly rewarded. Winger Harvey Elliott despatched a 67th-minute penalty following a foul on Elijah Dixon-Bonner, then with 11 minutes left midfielder Tom Hill's clever looping header drew his side level.

Late drama was to follow as Jack Bearne, who'd only just returned from a long-term injury, slid home fellow forward Stewart's unselfish cut-back with the final kick of the match.

The manager's verdict: "It was quite nice for the boys to have that little bit of pressure on them – that's why we enter these competitions.

"To go into games when there is a little bit more on them is important, and it's good for the staff as well."

Bring on the last sixteen!

UEFA YOUTH LEAGUE GROUP E

Matchday One: Napoli 1 Liverpool 1 (Stewart); Salzburg 1 Genk 1
Matchday Two: Liverpool 4 (Larouci, Williams, Jones, Brewster) Salzburg 2; Genk 3 Napoli 1
Matchday Three: Genk 0 Liverpool 2 (Stewart, Jones); Salzburg 7 Napoli 2
Matchday Four: Liverpool 0 Genk 1; Napoli 1 Salzburg 5
Matchday Five: Liverpool 7 Napoli 0 (Jones 3, Longstaff 2, Cain, Dixon-Bonner); Genk 0 Salzburg 2
Matchday Six: Salzburg 2 Liverpool 3 (Elliott, Hill, Bearne); Napoli 0 Genk 0

GROUP E TABLE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts
Liverpool	6	4	1	1	17	6	11	13
Salzburg	6	3	1	2	19	11	8	10
Genk	6	2	2	2	5	6	-1	8
Napoli	6	0	2	4	5	23	-18	2


Jack Bearne wins it in Salzburg!



PURRING OVER PEDRO

Pedro Chirivella gave a composed display in the FA Cup third-round win over Everton and manager Jürgen Klopp also highlighted the midfielder's display in last month's Carabao Cup quarter-final at Aston Villa. "Pedro played in the first half against Aston Villa and was probably the best player on the pitch," said the boss."We watched it on television in Qatar and we were completely over the moon about what we saw there. It was very important. It's important we can give these opportunities."

SADIO CROWNED AS THE BEST IN AFRICA



Sadio Mane is the 2019 CAF African Player of the Year.

The in-form attacker edged out his Liverpool team-mate Mohamed Salah – winner in 2017 and 2018 – and Algeria winger Riyad Mahrez to the prestigious award.

Votes from head coaches/technical directors and captains of the senior national teams from CAF's member associations saw Mane selected as the continent's best footballer of 2019. The Reds no10 collected the accolade at a ceremony in Egypt on 7 January and was also named in the FIFPro Africa Best XI for 2019, alongside Salah and Joel Matip.

Mane ended the 2018/19 season by winning the Champions League and Premier League Golden Boot award. The summer then saw him help guide Senegal to the final of the Africa Cup of Nations before he returned to claim more honours with Jürgen Klopp's side, scoring twice in the UEFA Super Cup win over Chelsea and teeing up Roberto Firmino's winner in the Club World Cup final against Flamengo in December.




L.F.C.
"ANFIELD IS A VERY SPECIAL VENUE"
Stephanie Fry, Merseyside
Sign-up and you'll be first to hear about the amazing Events taking place at Anfield.
From Concerts to Legends Dinners and other sporting events, you'll get the news straight to your inbox.



L.F.C.
SCOUSE
LIVERPOOL
POWER

WOMEN OF INFLUENCE



Photo: Alex Hurst/GIRLFANS

Through a powerful traditional medium Jacqui McAssey is shedding light on female football fans, their sense of belonging and the future of the women's game

Interview: Davey Brett

In a cafe in the middle of Liverpool, Jacqui McAssey is telling me about the first issue of her football fanzine, GIRLFANS. It involves her running after the Liverpool team-bus before a home game, and it's all about excitement – not just at Liverpool's title tilt that 2013/14 season but for Jacqui – seven months pregnant with a camera around her neck, late to meet her friend, running behind what felt like a personal police escort – working on a pioneering creative project.

GIRLFANS, founded in 2013, is a printed fanzine which documents female football fans across the UK. Each issue is dedicated to one club and showcases a collection of portraits with the aim of giving female football fans visibility and highlighting their sense of belonging.

For Jacqui, a senior lecturer in Fashion Communication at Liverpool John Moores University, the project has afforded her a unique window into the female side of both the men's and women's game. We caught up with her for a chat…

Jacqui, was there a particular moment or event that kickstarted the GIRLFANS zine?

In 2013 my friend Alex Hurst – a brilliant photographer from Liverpool – and I went to Anfield for the first game of the season and we stood outside the Kop and looked at everybody coming to the match.

We didn't even go inside that day, we just wanted to observe the crowd and we realised there were a lot of women and girls there. We took loads of photographs of the crowds but not of individual people.

The next home game we went along and we said, 'Right, let's go and talk to women and photograph them' and after that we decided to do it for the whole season. I applied for some arts funding and got a small amount for the project.

Did you have an idea from the beginning what it was you wanted to do?

We wanted to show these supporters, so the format is very simple: It's just images of women. And in its purest sense it's about visibility. There they are, a diverse group of people, from Liverpool or the rest of the world, of all ages, going to the match.

Did you feel like something was changing in football at the time?

At the time I thought why isn't anybody talking about women at the football? I looked at the 2011/12 statistics and in the Premier League, 23 per cent of the people going to the match were women. I actually thought, although that's only one in four, that was quite high.

It's very easy now because you've seen this explosion [of women's football] on social media, this recognition at last. But only six years ago I remember recording *Super Sunday* on Sky Sports and looking through the adverts and none of them featured women. If they did they were in some kind of subservient role, a waitress in a café or whatever.

Why did you choose the 'zine' format?

I'm from an art and design background so it wouldn't have been my thing to go write a paper about it. I expressed it in the way I thought was best – putting it out through a fanzine. That's how a lot of men had communicated their personal feelings about football or their team.

It felt right to do it and to design it in such a way that it was this little fanzine that you'd roll up and put in your pocket. When it was eventually printed we went down and distributed it at Anfield and had conversations with people and even found one of the women who was in it.

What stood out about the fans when you first started taking pictures for the project?

There was a focus on clothing in the first one. There's a study by Dr Stacey Pope from Durham University, *The Feminization Of Sports Fandom*, in which she was looking into pink merchandise and stuff like that.

The first issue of GIRLFANS also highlighted other things, like how many women were wearing replica shirts, which again I don't know if people outside of football have really considered. The take-up of the replica shirt now is huge and so important to clubs.

It's also so aligned with fashion. Even the way they reveal the shirts now. Nike at the FIFA Women's World Cup, their presentation was just after Paris Fashion Week and it was like a fashion presentation.

At Anfield there were a lot of women wearing red too, from head to toe.

Did any characters stick out from the first issue?

Olive. We had the most beautiful photograph of Olive Rowe. She passed away recently. At the time she was stood outside the Albert pub in this red coat with a red bag and her red shoes and you just knew that she'd been going for a long time and she'd seen a lot.

Since that first issue you've made zines about Everton, Tranmere, Celtic, Manchester City and Burnley – what made the experiences similar and how did they differ?

The older women, they are the coolest supporters, the ones who've been going and have seen everything. Women who take children and big groups of kids, I just take my hat off to them.

Going somewhere like Burnley was interesting. All the women I spoke to were so warm, they all love to talk about the game, about their team, sometimes about what they're wearing. They all have a passion for the game, it wouldn't matter where their team was, they'd still go and support them.

Although all of those clubs are different, I think it's all about these really deep bonds with their friends and family and I don't think you get that bond anywhere else.





Did you go to the match growing up?
I never went to the match when I was young. Nobody in my family was into football, although my mum was the connection – she'd always know the score. It's like there's a whole army of women in Liverpool whose partner or sons or whoever went to the game but they'd always know about it.

So my mum is interested in it, and does enjoy it, and came with us to the women's derby – the second time she's been to the match. She really likes it, she's very vocal which is quite interesting.

I said recently to someone that I never felt like I wasn't a part of it, and a lot of that is connected to the parades. Jürgen Klopp said it: to be out on the parade seeing people, and connecting with people and looking them in the eye, is a whole new experience. I remember shouting to Ray Clemence when I was a kid and he looked at me and gave me the thumbs-up and I remember thinking: oh my god – this is insane!

What was it like making the Celtic issue?
Amazing. I'd spoken to Michaela from 'On The Ball' [a campaign set up by female Celtic fans encouraging clubs to provide free sanitary items at matches] at the end of 2017 and I was going to pop up near Christmas.





I eventually got up there April 2018. On the same day Spirit of Shankly had gone up to try out the rail seating. I met them, it was lovely to talk to them, then I went back to the first game of the 18/19 season with my friend Zoe who is also a contributor and they got us into the rail-seating bit.

We felt really lucky to be invited. All the while, before the game, we were taking photographs. What I really liked was that during the game you're not allowed to get your phone out in that section.

The On The Ball campaign then extended to Liverpool, Everton and Tranmere. Merseyside took it on board which shows a great connection with Glasgow.

What have you learned about the female football fan and how do you think it transfers to the women's game?
They love attending and they're all forging those bonds and I think it's those bonds that need to be forged watching the women's team. It's about finding your tribe to watch the women play, isn't it?

Who wants to go? Who can we go with? Where are we going, where shall we meet, because it doesn't have to be a pub. It's creating a ritual. I grew up without a ritual because I didn't go. I'm almost envious of those people. That's possibly why I'm keeping on with the project. I've interviewed women who've watched Liverpool and I think: wow, I wish that was me.

What do you think the barriers are to these rituals?
If you've never been or if you don't go a lot, there's a certain pressure, especially if you go to watch the men. Even my mum who was going through the turnstiles, she's thinking: oh my god, what do I do here? That can be terrifying. You don't want to look silly. You've got people behind you giving you stick and it's a dead simple thing.

How was the women's derby earlier in the year?
It was great. The team had a lot of chances, it was just in the final third where we were unfortunate. It's so great to hear all of those young girls chanting for the team. Allez Allez Allez! In the Kop there was a bunch of kids singing.

Did it feel like a different crowd?
Definitely. It's an opportunity, isn't it. I took my son and his friend from school came with her parents. We made it a thing to go to, as a large group of people, because we could.

It's about the kids getting used to it and sitting for 90 minutes which when you're five, is a task. It's knowing where to go, it's navigating turnstiles, we went and got some food before it, we all had a pie, we gave some items to the foodbank at Homebaked and we created our own ritual which was really nice.

Because it wasn't a men's game, there was no aggression going in to get everything right. There's that sense of pressure there, getting in, knowing where you're going, knowing where the seat is.

Are you excited about the future of the women's game?
Yes! I think there will be a lot of progression – it's just the time-frame that people want it to progress in. We live such instantly gratifying lives. Everything is accelerated and we want the women's game to be there, but it will take time. It's just a case of chipping away at it from lots of different angles. Whether that's sponsorship, clubs supporting their women's teams equally…

I'm very excited about it in one way because of the amount of young girls I see in Liverpool who play. Friends, friend's daughters, friend's nieces. I've heard my friend say her niece doesn't have a team in school and she wants to start one. There's a huge groundswell among younger girls.

It's also worth recognising all the other women's teams that exist, not just the WSL. In the next ten years when all those young girls are really into it, they've been playing it, they'll maybe be forming their own teams. There'll be a huge change in attitudes to women's football.

What has been the best thing about making GIRLFANS?
A simple observation turned into something creative, which I hope now, on reflection, is still a way to effect some change. It doesn't just have to be a petition, or words, or a campaign – it could be a simple observation by someone. I've never been talked about as a photographer, but everyone's got a camera, everyone's got a phone and it's just about having a go.

It's not about me changing the world with photographs, but actually more about the people who have contacted me, like the women from On The Ball. To say, you've inspired us, then they go on and create a campaign.

They're the real influencers – influencing someone to not buy a product but go out and do something.

Follow GIRLFANS on Instagram @girlfanszine.





PROUD TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Reds full-back Trent Alexander-Arnold takes a break from record-setting assists to help out at a local foodbank where he finds out more about their invaluable work

While LFC Foundation's mission is to create life-changing opportunities for youngsters in Merseyside and beyond, Red Neighbours specifically focuses on making a difference to people living in and around the Anfield area in the L4, L5 and L6 postcodes.

At the end of last year England international and local lad Trent Alexander-Arnold helped Red Neighbours launch its Christmas Foodbank Appeal, dropping by North Liverpool Foodbank to donate food, meet staff and volunteers and find out more about the centre's important work, and declaring: "I'm really proud that my club is supporting such an important cause.

"It was a pleasure to be able to visit the foodbank and meet with the hard-working staff and volunteers – their dedication makes such a difference to people who need their help."

Trent's support was matched by a visit from Everton players Moise Kean and Alex Iwobi, who also donated food and helped to weigh and sort donations.

These visits, along with other club activity, helped to raise awareness of food-poverty and encourage food donations leading up to and throughout the Christmas period, which can be a difficult time for many people.

Back at Anfield club staff worked together to create the club's first-ever 'Christmas Giving Tree', made out of food donations, which featured on the club's official Christmas card distributed around the world. On display in the Main Stand, the tree was accompanied by a text-to-donate number.

In the new year fans can drop off their donations three hours before kick-off at three locations around the ground – a foodbank van located on Anfield Road, the official LFC retail store and Homebaked bakery on Oakfield Road.

Priority items include: UHT milk, long-life juice or cordial, coffee, pasta and curry sauce, tinned meat and vegetables, instant mash, rice-pudding and custard, jam, toiletries, cup-


LFC
AXA







a-soup, noodles and washing tablets.

All collected items are donated to North Liverpool Foodbank and made into three-day emergency food parcels for local people in crisis in North Liverpool.

Simon Huthwaite, its operations manager, says: "The continued support from both clubs is massively important and makes a huge difference to the work we do and the vulnerable people we support.

"Each year the food collected at Anfield and Goodison accounts for 25 per cent of the total food that we collect. The timing of the Christmas appeal was also really important as the period is our busiest time of year."

As part of LFC's dedication to tackle food poverty, the club's Red Neighbours community programme backs the Fans Supporting Foodbanks initiative and hosts foodbank collections at every home game.

Also at Anfield, locals from across the community were invited to get into the Christmas spirit at the stadium's annual carol service organised by Red Neighbours.

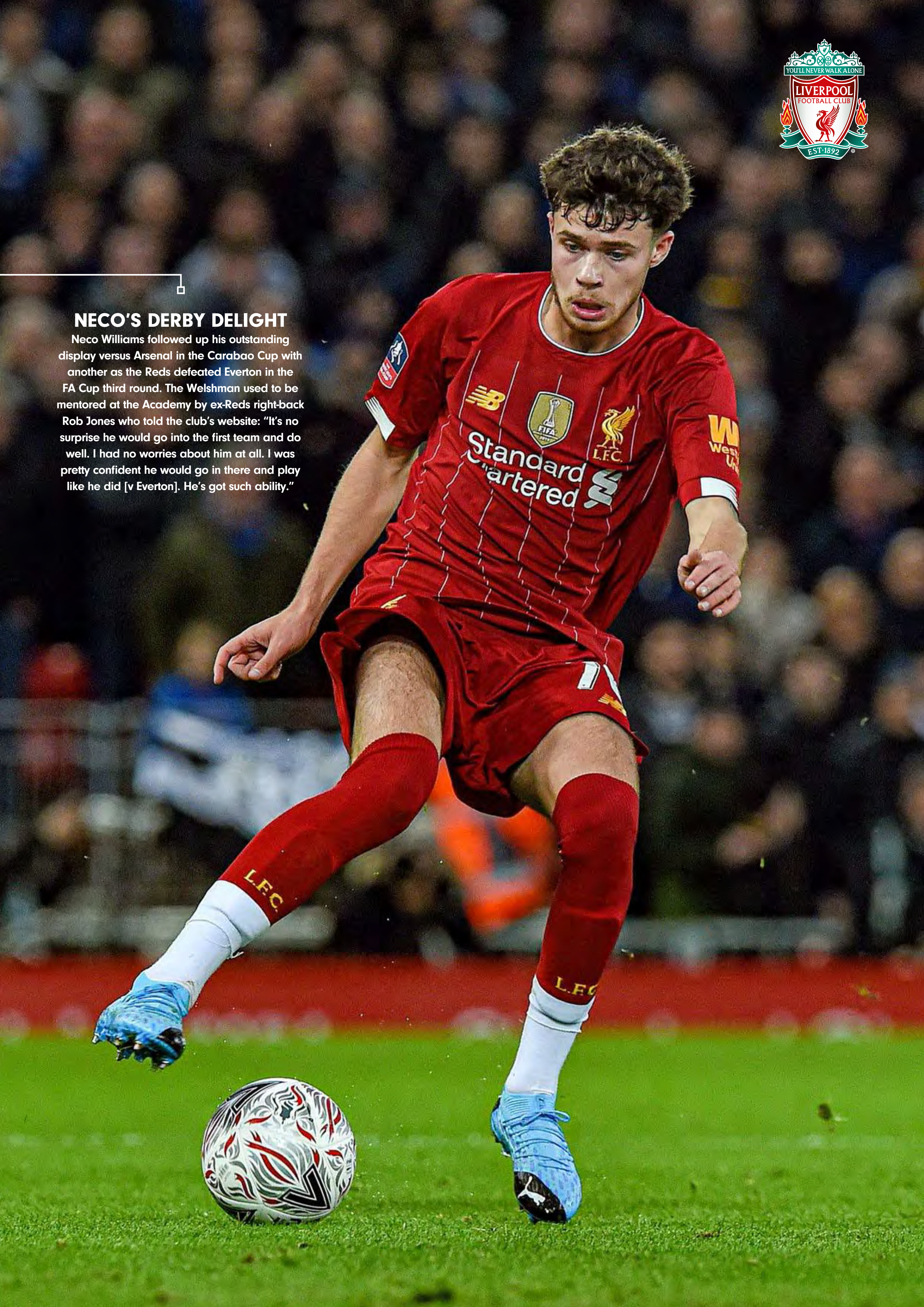
Club chaplain Bill Bygroves hosted the service as the choir from Notre Dame Catholic College stole the show with their rendition of *You'll Never Walk Alone*. Over 500 people were present, including Hillsborough Family Support Group chair Margaret Aspinall and Reds legend Alan Kennedy.

"What I like about it more than anything is that there are different types of people and cultures here today," said Margaret. "I love the way Bill involves everybody, making everyone feel special."

There were Christmas dinners for pensioners at Anfield, too, again thanks to Red Neighbours. Over 700 locals were invited over seven days to enjoy a three-course dinner and sing-along with friends and family.

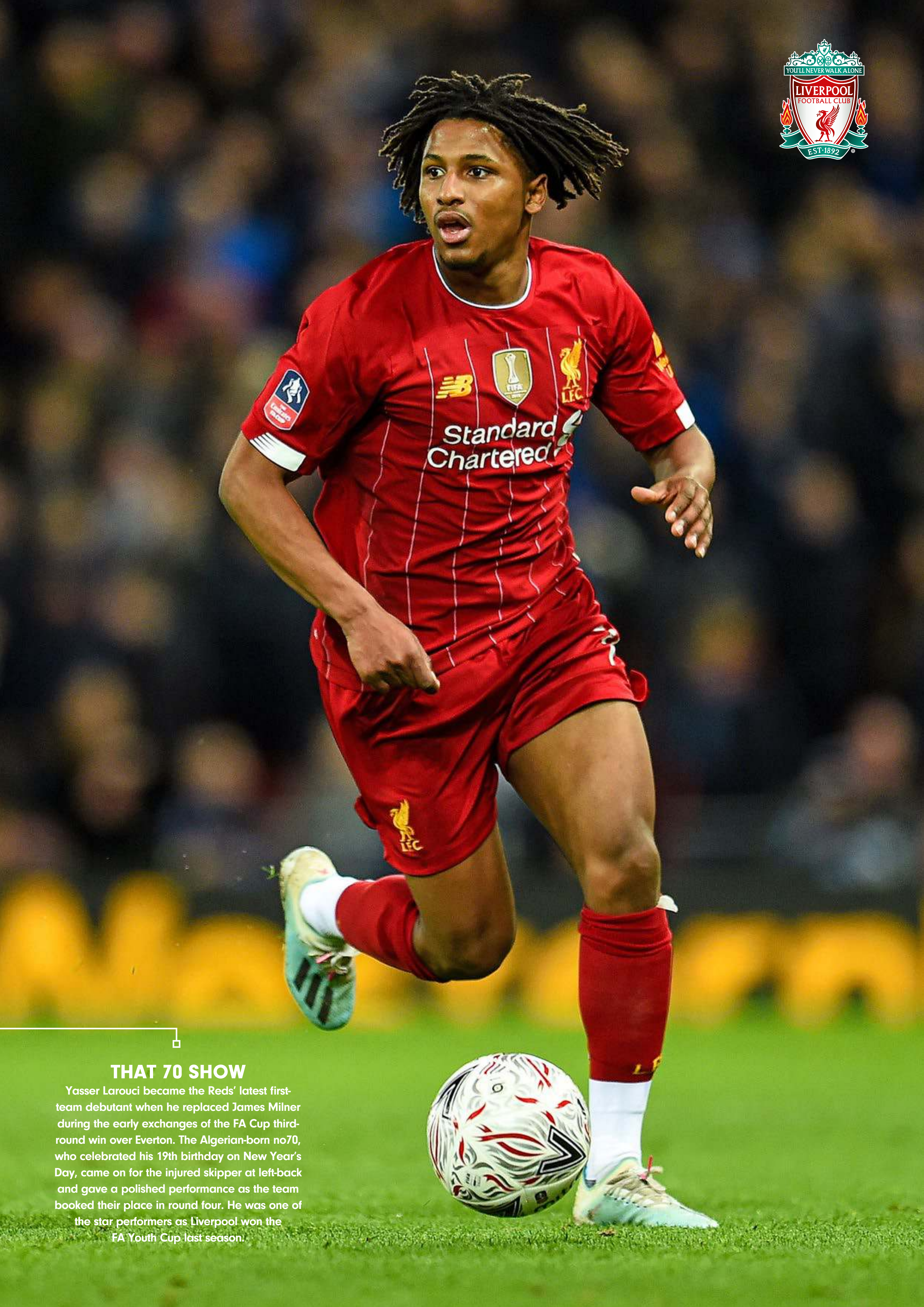
Local resident Brenda, who attends Red Neighbours' Monday Club every month, said: "It's great to be here, it means everyone gets out for the day and has a good time. The main thing is that it takes the loneliness away for a lot of the people."

Support for the elderly community is one of the four main areas of focus for Red Neighbours, and a number of activities took throughout the festive period and beyond as part of the programme's bid to tackle loneliness and isolation within the Anfield region.



NECO'S DERBY DELIGHT

Neco Williams followed up his outstanding display versus Arsenal in the Carabao Cup with another as the Reds defeated Everton in the FA Cup third round. The Welshman used to be mentored at the Academy by ex-Reds right-back Rob Jones who told the club's website: "It's no surprise he would go into the first team and do well. I had no worries about him at all. I was pretty confident he would go in there and play like he did [v Everton]. He's got such ability."



THAT 70 SHOW

Yasser Larouci became the Reds' latest first-team debutant when he replaced James Milner during the early exchanges of the FA Cup third-round win over Everton. The Algerian-born no70, who celebrated his 19th birthday on New Year's Day, came on for the injured skipper at left-back and gave a polished performance as the team booked their place in round four. He was one of the star performers as Liverpool won the FA Youth Cup last season.

WHAT'S IN





MENS GREY TRAVEL POLO 19/20
(MT018GG) £35



MENS PHANTOM TRAVEL POLO 19/20
(MT018PH) £35
JUNIOR (JT018PH) £30



MENS MANAGER'S SEAMLESS JERSEY 19/20
(MT078B) £55



JUNIOR GREY TRAVEL GRAPHIC TEE 19/20
(JT026GR) £20



STORE

NEW YEAR 2020 GIFT IDEAS FROM LFC

ON SALE NOW



Shop for all your Liverpool FC essentials in Official Club Stores and at liverpoolfc.com/store and for more details follow @LFCRetail on Twitter and Instagram!

What's On

JAN/FEB

NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTION

The opening month of 2020 brings some important Premier League games for the Reds. Following the 2-0 win over Sheffield United and FA Cup victory against Everton, there's a first appearance at the new Tottenham Hotspur Stadium followed by a Thursday-night trip to Molineux to take on Wolves.

The Reds will be looking to repeat their hard-fought festive win over Nuno Espirito Santo's side before travelling to the London Stadium to face David Moyes' West Ham United on Wednesday 29 January.

It's back to FA Cup action with a tie at either League One Shrewsbury Town or Bristol City of the Championship. All fourth-round matches are scheduled to be played between 24-27 January. After that, Jürgen Klopp's men host Southampton on Saturday 1 February at Anfield.


YOU'LL NEVER WALK ALONE
LIVERPOOL
FOOTBALL CLUB

JAN/FEB

What's On

WOMEN'S JANUARY SIX-POINTER



Liverpool FC Women face a crunch away game in mid-January. Bottom of the table at the halfway stage, the Reds are in Barclays FA Women's Super League action at the team directly above them when they make the trip to the Stoke Gifford Stadium to face Bristol City Women on Sunday 19 January (3pm).

Before that, Vicky Jepson's team host Manchester United Women at Prenton Park in their first home game of the year on 12 January and begin their interest in the FA Women's Cup when they welcome Blackburn Rovers on 26 January.

ALL THOSE YEARS AGO...

12 years since Martin Skrtel signed for LFC on 11 January 2008
42 years since Graeme Souness made his Reds debut on 14 January 1978
23 years since Jamie Carragher scored his first LFC goal on 18 January 1997
101 years since Bob Paisley was born on 23 January 1919
12 years since Lucas scored his first goal for Liverpool on 26 January 2008
33 years since John Aldridge joined the Reds on 27 January 1987

And it's four years since Jürgen Klopp broke his glasses at Carrow Road! The boss was just three months into his Liverpool reign when his vision for the club went hazy – at least for a minute or two.

The brand of 'heavy metal' football that characterised his first season at the helm after he took over form Brendan Rodgers was in full flow when the Reds travelled to Norfolk to take on struggling Norwich City.

At various stages Liverpool took the lead through Roberto Firmino, then trailed 3-1 nine minutes after the break, fought back to lead 4-3, conceded a 90th-minute equaliser and then went and won it through Adam Lallana's injury-time goal. It was all kinds of crazy and Klopp was not impressed at his side shipping four goals.

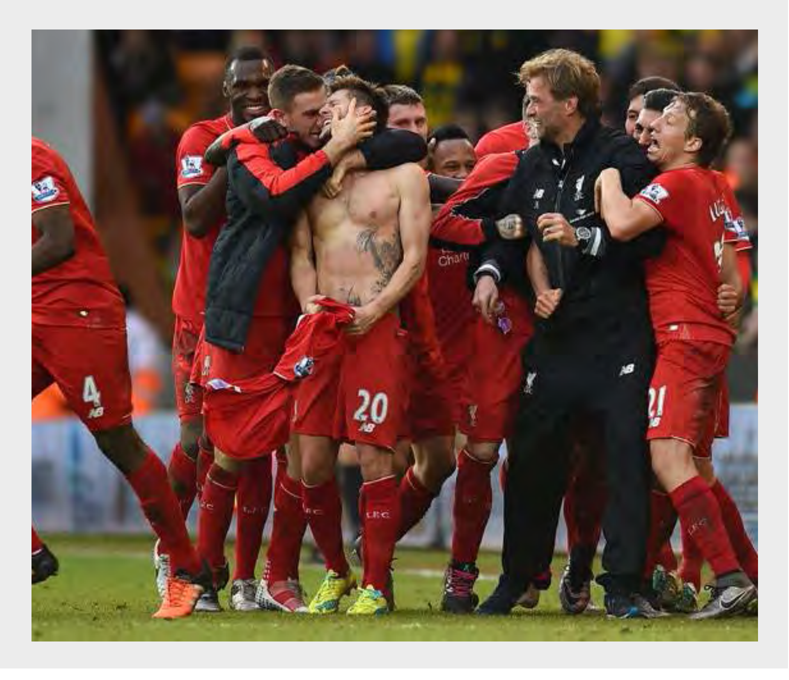
"I was an under-average player but if I could do something, it was defend set-plays," he said. "It's not that difficult. But now, as you saw, it's like a self-fulfilling prophecy.

"Everybody is talking about it, we are thinking about it and you see it in situations. At second balls, we are thinking 'oh my goodness'. That's the situation.

"But I'm not sure we would have scored five if we didn't concede four."

In the melee that followed Lallana's winner, Liverpool players headed towards the bench to celebrate their last-gasp winner during which striker Christian Benteke jumped towards the bespectacled boss and left him de-spectacled.

"I have a second pair of glasses but I can't find them," lamented Klopp afterwards. "It's really difficult looking for glasses without glasses."



HAPPY BIRTHDAY

Kamil Grabara 21 on 8 January
Lucas Leiva 33 on 9 January
Ray Houghton 58 on 9 January
Emile Heskey 42 on 11 January
Alvaro Arbeloa 37 on 17 January
Phil Thompson 66 on 21 January



Jose Enrique 34 on 23 January
Pep Lijnders 37 on 24 January
Luis Suarez 33 on 24 January
Jamie Carragher 42 on 28 January
Peter Crouch 39 on 30 January
Curtis Jones 19 on 30 January



2019/20 Fixtures & Results

AUGUST		SCORE/KO	TV	SCORERS
Sun 04	Manchester City (CS, N)	1-1*	BT	Matip (pens: Shaqiri, Lallana, Chamberlain, Salah)
Fri 09	Norwich City (H)	4-1	Sky	Hanley (OG), Salah, Van Dijk, Origi
Wed 14	Chelsea (Super Cup, N)	2-2**	BT	Mane 2 (pens: Firmino, Fabinho, Origi, A-Arnold, Salah)
Sat 17	Southampton (A)	2-1		Mane, Firmino
Sat 24	Arsenal (H)	3-1	Sky	Matip, Salah 2 (1 pen)
Sat 31	Burnley (A)	3-0	Sky	Wood (OG), Mane, Firmino
SEPTEMBER				
Sat 14	Newcastle United (H)	3-1	BT	Mane 2, Salah
Tue 17	Napoli (UCL Matchday 1, A)	0-2	BT	
Sun 22	Chelsea (A)	2-1	Sky	Alexander-Arnold, Firmino
Wed 25	MK Dons (Carabao Cup 3, A)	2-0	Sky	Milner, Hoever
Sat 28	Sheffield United (A)	1-0	BT	Wijnaldum
OCTOBER				
Wed 02	Salzburg (UCL Matchday 2, H)	4-3	BT	Mane, Robertson, Salah 2
Sat 05	Leicester City (H)	2-1		Mane, Milner (pen)
Sun 20	Manchester United (A)	1-1	Sky	Lallana
Wed 23	Genk (UCL Matchday 3, A)	4-1	BT	Oxlade-Chamberlain 2, Mane, Salah
Sun 27	Tottenham Hotspur (H)	2-1	Sky	Henderson, Salah (pen)
Wed 30	Arsenal (Carabao Cup 4, H)	5-5**	Sky	Mustafi (OG), Milner (pen), Oxlade-Chamberlain, Origi 2 (pens: Milner, Lallana, Brewster, Origi, Jones)
NOVEMBER				
Sat 02	Aston Villa (A)	2-1		Robertson, Mane
Tue 05	Genk (UCL Matchday 4, H)	2-1	BT	Wijnaldum, Oxlade-Chamberlain
Sun 10	Manchester City (H)	3-1	Sky	Fabinho, Salah, Mane
Sat 23	Crystal Palace (A)	2-1		Mane, Firmino
Wed 27	Napoli (UCL Matchday 5, H)	1-1	BT	Lovren
Sat 30	Brighton (H)	2-1		Van Dijk 2
DECEMBER				
Wed 04	Everton (H)	5-2	AP	Origi 2, Shaqiri, Mane, Wijnaldum
Sat 07	Bournemouth (A)	3-0		Oxlade-Chamberlain, Keita, Salah
Tue 10	Salzburg (UCL Matchday 6, A)	2-0	BT	Keita, Mane, Salah
Sat 14	Watford (H)	2-0	BT	Salah 2
Tue 17	Aston Villa (Carabao Cup QF, A)	0-5	Sky	
Wed 18	Monterrey (CWC SF)	2-1	BBC	Keita, Firmino
Sat 21	Flamengo (CWF final)	1-0^	BBC	Firmino
Thu 26	Leicester City (A)	4-0	AP	Firmino 2, Milner (pen), Aleaxander-Arnold
Sun 29	Wolverhampton W (H)	1-0	Sky	Mane
JANUARY				
Thu 02	Sheffield United (H)	2-0	BT	Salah, Mane
Sun 05	Everton (FA Cup 3, H)	1-0	BBC	Jones
Sat 11	Tottenham Hotspur (A)	5.30pm	Sky	
Sun 19	Manchester United (H)	4.30pm	Sky	
Thu 23	Wolverhampton W (A)	8pm	BT	
Sun 26	Bristol City/Shrewsbury (FA Cup 4, A)	TBC		
Wed 29	West Ham United (A)	7.45pm		
FEBRUARY				
Sat 01	Southampton (H)	3pm		
Sat 15	Norwich City (A)	5.30pm	Sky	
Tue 18	Atletico Madrid (UCL R of 16 1)	8pm	BT	
Mon 24	West Ham United (H)	8pm	Sky	
Sat 29	Watford (A)	5.30pm	Sky	
MARCH				
Wed 04	FA Cup 5	TBC		
Sat 07	Bournemouth (H)	3pm		
Wed 11	Atletico Madrid (UCL R of 16 2)	8pm	BT	
Sat 21	Crystal Palace (H)	3pm		
Sat 21	FA Cup 6	TBC		
APRIL				
Sat 04	Manchester City (A)	3pm		
T/W 07/08	UCL QF 1	TBC	BT	
Sat 11	Aston Villa (H)	3pm		
T/W 14/15	UCL QF 2	TBC	BT	
Sat 18	Brighton (A)	3pm		
Sat 18	FA Cup SF	TBC		
Sat 25	Burnley (H)	3pm		
T/W 28/29	UCL SF 1	TBC	BT	
MAY				
Sat 02	Arsenal (A)	3pm		
T/W 05/06	UCL SF 2	TBC	BT	
Sat 09	Chelsea (H)	3pm		
Sun 17	Newcastle United (A)	3pm		
Sat 23	FA Cup final (N)	TBC		
Sat 30	UCL final (N)	TBC	BT	





All fixtures subject to change. AP = Amazon Prime *lost 5-4 on pens ** won 5-4 on pens ^after extra-time



NEIL MELLOR

This is a group of players, young and experienced, that work for each other and have a connection with the supporters

When I saw the contrasting starting XIs before Liverpool's FA Cup third-round tie against Everton I was, like most home supporters, fearful of what could transpire.

Carlo Ancelotti named a strong Everton team and there had been a bit of a reaction from the players to his appointment, so I was concerned it might be a difficult night for a young Liverpool side. But they showed no fear and that underpinned their fantastic 1-0 victory.

They were brave and they handled a big atmosphere well. I've been to a lot of games, but I left Anfield that night thinking it was one of the best games I've ever been to because of the performance and result from a Liverpool team that had everything stacked against it.

The way in which they came together to win shows what a special atmosphere and momentum there as at Liverpool right now. I saw a team with togetherness – a group of players that work for each other and have a connection with the supporters. The supporters were very much behind the players and they responded to that.

What I will also say is that those working at the Academy deserve great credit. We've seen the benefit of their work through Trent Alexander-Arnold in the first-team and now in how fringe players benefit from the coaching and experience they get there.

Young players now, more so than in my time, get experiences that help them prepare for first-team football. They play in the UEFA Youth League, the Leasing.com Trophy against senior players, and many have played in the Carabao Cup. Pedro Chirivella, in particular, definitely benefited from captaining Liverpool at Aston Villa. This helped him to handle a Merseyside derby FA Cup tie so well, as does training at Melwood.

I've watched all these lads progress and I remember seeing Neco Williams, at the age of 16, playing for Steven Gerrard's U18s. Stevie always rated him very highly and at 18 he's now played first-team games against Arsenal and Everton at Anfield, doing extremely well.

Neco has got good delivery and is learning from maybe the best right-back in the world at the moment in Trent. I thought his defending against Everton was very good too.

Nat Phillips was recalled from a loan-spell at Stuttgart to make his debut at centre-half. He is a late developer who has benefited from the experience of his dad, Jimmy, who played for Bolton. Nat had a shaky start, but after making a brilliant tackle on Richarlison in front of the dugouts after about 20 minutes he became more commanding.

He played alongside Joe Gomez, who is the same age at 22 but played like Virgil van Dijk would have done alongside any other centre-half. Joe's maturity and experience really helped.

Yasser Larouci had to come on at left-back for James Milner early on. We saw glimpses of Yasser in pre-season, but he's been frustrated by injuries since. The key thing was that he was ready when he came on and did really well, as did Harvey Elliott further forward.

Curtis Jones was, of course, the match-winner with an absolute wondergoal – a truly stunning moment we'll talk about for many years. He played slightly more advanced when Takumi Minamino went off and we saw what he's capable of because he's a very good technical player, a local lad who is highly thought of by Jürgen Klopp.

To continue to progress he has to keep learning, continue showing the right attitude and continue to take opportunities when they come.



Curtis is a lad who also benefited from working with Gerrard for year. Stevie taught him what standards are necessary to be a Liverpool player and now he must learn from the senior players to ensure his goal against Everton is just the start for him.

Bristol City or Shrewsbury Town await Liverpool in the FA Cup at the end of January and it will be interesting to see which players have gone out on loan to enhance their development by then.

I expect the manager to make a similar number of changes at the end of a busy month, so it's up to any young players involved to again take their opportunity by helping Liverpool reach the FA Cup fifth round after an unforgettable derby win.

• Follow Neil on Twitter @NeilMellor33

























WE ARE PLEASED TO RECOGNISE THE OFFICIAL PARTNERS OF LIVERPOOL FC

WE ARE LIVERPOOL.
THIS MEANS MORE.